

The Guardian Angel

Be thou a bright
flame before me,
Be thou a guiding
Star above me
Be thou a smooth
path below me,
And be a kindly
Shepherd behind me
Today - to-morrow
and for ever.

20p
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THE SECRET OF A WARM HEART AND OTHER PAPERS

BY THE REV.

NORMAN MACLEOD CAIE

M.A., B.D.

Author of

'Night Scenes of Scripture,' 'The Mount of Expiation'
'The Vintage,' and 'Seven Words of Love'

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TO
MY WIFE

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FOREWORD

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N. M. C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. THE SECRET OF A WARM HEART	9
2. THE SIN OF LOW EXPECTATIONS	19
3. IF ONLY THERE BE LIFE!	29
4. FACING THE FUTURE	34
5. ERIC LIDDELL'S MOTTO : "CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD NEEDS CHRIST"	44
6. THE CONIES AND THE ROCKS (A STUDY IN COMPENSATION)	54
7. CHRIST AND SOCRATES	61
8. JOHN G. PATON	66
9. SAINT COLUMBA	72
10. CURIOUS BIBLES	77
11. CATCHING COLOUR	82
12. A BIT OF THE SUN	87
13. LOOKING THROUGH LEATHER	93
14. WIRELESS	98
15. MOUNT SINAI AND THE GOSPELS	103

BIBLE GARDENS

	PAGE
16. THE GARDEN OF EDEN	110
17. THE GARDEN OF NABOTH	115
18. THE GARDEN OF SOLOMON'S SONG	120
19. THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE	125
20. THE GARDEN OF THE SEPULCHRE	130
21. THE GARDEN OF PARADISE	135
22. TURNING THE CLOUDS ABOUT	140

I

THE SECRET OF A WARM HEART

SHORTLY before his death the good Lord Shaftesbury was asked by Miss Cobb what had prompted him to leave the society of the high-born and become the knight-errant of the poor. He replied that, when still a lad of ten or twelve, his heart used to bleed at the sight of aristocratic boys, among whom he played, looking down on the waifs and strays of the city and taunting them. As long ago as that, he had resolved to do what he could to help them. The mainspring of all his work had been his warm and sensitive heart.

“In the world,” said an old thinker, “there is nothing great but man; and in man there is nothing great but mind.” Yet a warm heart can sometimes do more than even a highly developed mind. “The heart has reasons which reason does not know.”

During the struggle which culminated in the Reformation, Erasmus was probably keener-witted than Luther. But Luther was bigger-

hearted. And it was Luther, not Erasmus, who did the work.

THE PILLARS OF LOVE

When Mr M'All began his celebrated Mission in Paris, he could only utter two sentences in the tongue of the working-men who composed his audience. One was, "God loves you," and the other, "I love you." Yet on these two pillars the whole arch was reared.

It has been said that the bigness of heart behind "Uncle Tom's Cabin" enabled Harriet Beecher Stowe to do more to sweep slavery out of America than all the intellects in the Congress of the United States.

Of one of his characters Charles Reade says : " Meadows never spoke of his mother ; paid her a small allowance with the regularity and affectionate grace of clockwork." Occasionally such cold and calculating people meet us in everyday life. Many faculties in their natures are highly developed, but their affections are starved and their love seems dead. It is a pity that such people cannot have corners fenced off for them, so that they can live alone.

No man can be truly great who is not tender-hearted. Heroes have always wept, from Homer's giants down to Abraham Lincoln and W. E. Gladstone, who shed many hot tears in

public speeches when denouncing the Bulgarian atrocities.

“Why,” asked Carlyle once of Ruskin, “do Emerson and you scarcely pay the cost of publishing, while there are novels that run up into the hundred thousands ?”

“Because,” replied Ruskin thoughtfully, “the novel has love in it.”

Without love—some element of tenderness and warmth—neither book nor man can reach the summit of success.

Must the cold and calculating person be accepted as inevitable; or can the spiritual glow be acquired? No quality of course can be imparted to the soul, as a slide is to the magic lantern; but it is always possible to “grow in grace.” The orange was originally a bitter berry, but culture has transformed it into an apple of gold. “Inspiration,” said James Russell Lowell, “comes by exercise.” A divine command in Ezekiel reads: “Make you a new heart and a new spirit”; and a big and tender heart can assuredly be developed by faithful adherence to the methods of the grace of God.

A DEADLY FOE

The warm heart has no deadlier foe than pride. Horace scornfully declared: “I hate the vulgar crowd and keep them at arm’s-

length"; and in his "Ethics," Aristotle gives us a curious picture of what he conceives the ideal sage. The "large-souled" man, he says, concerns himself wholly with honour. He accepts a certain pleasure—just as much as is compatible with his superiority—from the respect shown to him by the illustrious; but he very properly despises the majority of his neighbours. He dislikes taking favours, because he always wants his own dignity recognised. When he is compelled to accept presents, he invariably returns larger presents in exchange, because he is determined never to incur an obligation. He never expresses wonder, since that might lead people to minimise his lofty-mindedness. His superiority is revealed by the loudness of his voice and the haughtiness of his very walk.

Beside such a picture we may set that of the pitiful and tender-hearted Christ, washing the feet of the disciples in the Upper Room, or weeping over the city of Jerusalem. Medical experts say that the human body is becoming more sensitive to pain. How exquisitely sensitive was Jesus! But the striking thing is that never once was it His own pain which drew His tears. Men denied, betrayed, crucified Him; but no sigh escaped His lips. His entire concern, even on Calvary, was altruistic. His heart was as big as the world, and it broke for the world's

redemption. It is impossible to live in fellowship with Him, and yet maintain the Stoic aloofness from the needs of others. All the doors which lead to Christ open out of selfish superiority and pride. "God gave Solomon," says the sacred record, " largeness of heart "; and Christ will so widen and exalt the spirit which accompanies with Him that it can appropriate the words :—

" I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true ;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too ;
For the cause that needs assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do."

CHARITY OF JUDGMENT

Another foe of the warm heart is Censoriousness.

" What did you preach about yesterday ? " asked an elderly minister of a brother, one Monday.

" On the Judgment," was the reply.

" Did you do it tenderly ? " inquired the old man.

Among the Levitical laws, there was one which said, " Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

But to obey this command, the utmost tact and gentleness are needed. The region of motive is very difficult to explore, and serious mistakes are possible regarding it.

In a small town in France there once lived a man who used only the barest necessities and wore the meanest clothes. The children jeered at him as a miser. But the poor of the town had long suffered from bad water, and this man had really been saving for years to build an aqueduct for the introduction of pure water. At his death the sum he had amassed was found sufficient; and the inestimable blessing of clean water from the hills was installed. The man's motive was entirely different from what his conduct had suggested. In this world there is constant need for charity of judgment. "Comprendre," said Madame de Staël, "c'est pardonner."

"If we knew the cares and trials,
Knew the efforts all in vain,
And the bitter disappointments,
Understood the loss and gain,
Would the grim external roughness
Seem, I wonder, just the same?
Should we help where now we hinder?
Should we pity where we blame?"

"Many an unlovely oddity," wrote George Eliot, "many an irritating fault, has come of a

hard sorrow which has crushed and maimed the nature, just when it was expanding into picturesque beauty. And the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame may be but the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is amputated." The man whom we coldly discuss may all the while be shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is hard and strength is failing him to speak the kindly word and do the Christlike deed.

An old Russian fable tells of a wise swine, Kavron, which found its way into the courtyard of the royal palace. It saw only the kitchen and the stable. On its return home, its mother asked, "What have you seen? They say that kings' palaces have fine pictures, rich tapestries, precious gems." "Nay," replied Kavron, "that is not true. I saw none of these." Since the swine got no farther than the courtyard, it could not have seen them, of course. And censorious people who like to have a store of suspicions circulating about others are frequently in the same position. It is well for every one to keep in mind that some trials do not announce themselves by muffled doorbells. In "The Map of Life" Lecky says: "It often happens that we have been long blaming a man for manifest faults of character, till at last the disclosure of some grave bodily or mental disease, which has long

been working unperceived, explains his faults and turns our blame into pity."

THE POWER OF SYMPATHY

"People would instantly care for others as well as themselves," said Ruskin, "if only they would *imagine* others as well as themselves." Perhaps Ruskin lays his finger there upon the deepest secret of the warm heart.

At the close of the war between Russia and Japan, many thousands of admirers gathered to welcome Admiral Togo back to Yokohama, covered with the glory of his conquests. But it came out afterwards that the Admiral had requested his own son not to come to hail the fleet, because so many parents had lost sons, and so many sons had lost parents, that it would have been too painful for them to have witnessed the affectionate greeting between the great chieftain and his boy. Admiral Togo strikingly *imagined* others, and felt their experiences as though they had been his own.

If a piano be struck in a room in which another piano stands untouched, you can hear the untouched instrument sound the same note if you lay your ear close to it, just as though some spirit passed its hand across the keys. Sympathetic souls are like the untouched piano.

The strings of their hearts vibrate in response to those who suffer.

“If I knew you and you knew me ;
If both of us could clearly see,
And with a piercing sight divine
The meaning of your life and mine,
I’m sure that we would differ less,
And clasp our hands in friendliness ;
Our thoughts would pleasantly agree,
If I knew you and you knew me !”

WORKING FOR OTHERS

In a confidential moment, a lady told a friend that the most fortunate thing she had ever done was to undertake the visitation of a workhouse. She had become so despondent and depressed in spirits as even to contemplate suicide ; but her new avenue of service had revealed to her that she had a heart, and she was now filled with a fresh and exhilarating glow of gladness.

The confession suggests a momentous secret of the warm heart. “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.”

An Eastern legend tells of one who, in expectation of famine, had stored away a vast quantity of wheat. Intent on a high price, he long resisted the people’s appeals to sell. At length, when they were willing to pay anything he asked, the granary was opened ; and nothing but dust and worms was found within !

Selfishness is always self-destruction ; but kindness and benevolence always bless richly the heart out of which they flow. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." It is eternally better to give than to receive ; and the greatest luxury beneath the stars is found in doing good.

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest :
It blesseth him that *gives* and him that *takes*."

II

THE SIN OF LOW EXPECTATIONS

It was a curious test that the aged Elisha applied to the mettle of Joash, the young Israelite monarch. After discharging the arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria—the prophet's trembling hands being placed over the king's—the latter was bidden by Elisha to strike upon the ground, evidently to attest his spirit and determination. Joash, we read, "smote thrice and stayed." In his hesitation the old man read pusillanimity and weakness. "You should have struck five or six times," he said. "Then you would have won a great victory over the Syrians. Why did you not go on?"

Joash apparently had no genuine enthusiasm for the conflict, and no expectation of worsting his foe. He distrusted his own powers.

Many a battle is lost in life for the same reason. People have large possibilities, but they fail as a result of an underestimate of their own capacity. Situations look difficult, and they cannot see how they will ever manage to overcome the obstacles in their path. If they would only

March "breast-forward" and meet the difficulties one by one as they arise, they would gradually acquire the experience which would give them final victory. A confident outlook on life is an indispensable quality in success, and, if supported by loyalty and persistence, it will enable one to go far. "Confidence," said John Milton, "imparts a wonderful inspiration to its possessor."

THE WRONG TO ONESELF

*To cherish Low Expectations, in the First Place,
is to wrong Oneself*

A Greek fable tells that Merops, King of Cos, in order to expiate a certain sin, was condemned to become an eagle and to fly with head turned towards the earth. Modern materialistic theories degrade man in similar fashion. Not only do they impoverish our conceptions of God. They resolve the human mind into grey matter, and the human thought into phosphorus or electricity. Under such a philosophy, it is scarcely possible for man to preserve an adequate self-respect. His outlook is necessarily lowered, his ideals become coarsened, his enthusiasms languish. Life loses its sense of being a lofty mission altogether.

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

For a true self-estimate, man must believe himself not a mechanism but a spirit. His "honest haughtiness of nature" will be the mould in which alone a worthy ideal for himself and lofty expectations for himself will be formed. It is quite possible to waterproof the soul amid a shower of blessings ; and we can receive no nourishment if we lock our teeth. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." "God does not compel," said Clement of Alexandria, "for violence is a thing which God hates." It is for each to say how lofty shall be his ideal. A suppliant begged ten talents from Alexander the Great. Alexander gave him fifty. "Ten were all I asked," the man explained. "Ten may be enough for you to take," said Alexander, "but they are not enough for me to give."

"Life is a leaf of paper white,
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.
Greatly begin ! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime ;
Not failure, but low aim, is crime."

Lofty ideals, of course, need the backing of loyal and determined effort. It is significant that the fortunate seeker of the Holy Grail, in Tennyson's poem, was the good knight Sir Galahad, whose "tough lance thrusteth sure." Aspiration ought always to be ahead of per-

formance, and "a man's reach should exceed his grasp," but resolute struggle to achieve his expectations should never flag.

It is told of Napoleon that his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, tried once to dissuade him from a campaign. Napoleon opened the window of the room in which they stood, and said: "Do you see that star?"

"No," came the reply. "I see no star."

Napoleon just turned his back, and said: "But I see it."

And to see one's star, whether others see it or not—and to follow the gleam—is the secret of a noble life.

It was the way of Jesus. Meek though He was, He insisted on being loyal to Himself. He refused to live on any other pattern than His own. What He knew to be the Voice of God within His soul, He obeyed even to the Cross. And the inward bidding sped His footsteps. Without such fidelity, expectation is impotent.

The only ground for confidence lies in determined effort.

"Do you expect to shovel all that coal in?" asked a passer-by of a little fellow in kilts who was putting a big consignment into the cellar.

"Yes, sir," came the reply, "if I keep at it."

The shield of Martin Luther bore on one side two hammers, and on the other a winged heart

with the legend, "*Astra petimus*"—"We seek the stars."

"Lord, let me not be too content
With life in trifling service spent :
Let me aspire !
When days with petty cares are filled,
Let me with holy thoughts be thrilled
Of something higher."

THE WRONG TO OTHERS

*To cherish Low Expectations, in the Second
Place, is to injure Others*

An Eastern epilogue tells how, one day, Jesus saw a group of people gathered round an object lying on the ground. It was a dead dog, with a halter round its neck. Every one abhorred it. "Faugh!" said a bystander, "how it pollutes the air." "Look at its torn hide," exclaimed another. "Doubtless hanged for thieving," scoffed a third. But gazing down compassionately, Jesus said: "Pearls are not equal to the whiteness of its teeth." Then the people knew that it was Jesus, since He found something to praise, even in a dead dog.

The most effective way of drawing the best out of people is to expect something good from them, and appreciate it to the fullest. To do this, it is not necessary to flatter or play upon their vanity. But when an Apostle bade us

“Honour all men,” he meant us to take them at their highest valuation, and always to see in them the children of God. “Wherefore,” as another wrote of Jesus, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Man is the true Shekinah, and we shall only save him as we seek to call his divine nature forth. What a subtle kind of heartache we give to others when we approach them in the reverse mood—scanning them for faults and swathing them in the wet blankets of our depreciation !

“As we meet and touch each day
The many travellers on our way,
Let every such brief contact be
A glorious helpful ministry ;
The contact of the soil and seed,
Each giving to the other’s need,
Each helping on the other’s best,
And blessing each as well as blest.”

By repeated acts of disobedience, a soldier had exhausted the patience of his superior officer. “I have warned, threatened, scolded, punished him,” said the latter, “till I can do no more.” “Have you tried forgiving him ?” asked a friend. And the man who had lost the power to feel a blow had still the power to feel a kindness. The forgiving of his faults cured him. The appeal to what was best in him won. Such an appeal has frequently surprising results.

It is little wonder that our redemptive efforts have sometimes poor success, when we remember how poor our expectations have often been. Do we call upon human nature always for its best? This is one of the ways in which true and loyal friendship may be expressed. "Our friends," said Emerson, "are those who make us do what we *can*." And friends will always achieve that, if they appeal to the best and highest in each other. Genuine friends can do no less. "Iron sharpeneth iron: so doth a man sharpen the countenance of his friend." "There's the man who made me," said Dr Thomas Guthrie, pointing an acquaintance to a passer-by upon an Edinburgh street. Dr Guthrie told his companion, as the passer-by smilingly approached, that he owed all he was to the man's loyal encouragement and sympathy.

" May every soul that touches mine,
Be it the slightest contact, get therefrom some good,
Some little grace, one kindly thought,
One aspiration yet unfelt, one bit of courage."

LIMITING GOD

*To cherish Low Expectations, in the Third Place,
is to limit God*

There is a picture of Augustine and his mother gazing up towards heaven. "Oh, if God would speak to us," he is saying. "Perhaps He *is* speak-

ing," the mother replies. It is useless to question whether God is ready to impart to us His grace and help. "Before they call, I will answer."

Our attention should rather turn to our own hearts. When a message has been broadcasted, everything depends upon the receiver being attuned. May the poverty and weakness of our expectations not prevent us from receiving the messages which God is yearning to give to us? Everywhere and always, God has been speaking, and His illumination has been ready for men to take. But men have heard His voice and received His illumination only according as their minds have been open and their spirits responsive to His call.

"God is not dumb, that He should speak no more.
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor.
There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find."

Astronomy teaches that the peculiar angle of the earth's axis is the cause of the varying seasons—the sweet spring, the glowing summer, and the rest. So it becomes vitally important that the soul of man should be kept at the angle to which God can speak intelligibly.

"A hint of softness in the air,
The answering note to Nature's prayer :
Spring's wondrous miracle to be—
Let it be springtime, Lord, to me !

Long have I dwelt in winter's night,
When moon and stars withheld their light,
With raging winds and roaring sea—
Let it be springtime, Lord, to me!"

A Greek legend has it that Orpheus, the god of music, was drowned and his lyre lost in the sea. Perhaps the story was meant to signify that the secret of harmony had perished from the world. If so, Christ, when He plunged into the ocean of human sorrow, recovered it ; and His spirit in human hearts will fit them to receive God's richest gifts. " Speak, Lord," it will then be possible to say ; " for Thy servant heareth."

The captain of the ship on which Morrison the great missionary sailed, and who knew something of the impenetrable conservatism of the Chinese, said to him :—

" And so, Mr Morrison, you really expect that you will make an impression on the great Chinese Empire ? "

" No, sir," returned Morrison, " but I expect God will."

Even Christian people limit God by the poor-ness of their expectations of what He can and will do. They implore Him to pour out His Spirit ; but they have little hope that He will make any appreciable change upon the face of things.

And sometimes worldliness lowers our expectations. When Ulysses was sailing along the coast of the Sirens, he filled the ears of his seamen with wax, and caused himself to be bound firmly to the mast, lest he should be seized with the temptation to yield to the fatal charms. Let all prepare for the enticements of the world a resistance which shall keep their spiritual enthusiasms fresh and keen.

When Alexander the Great crossed into Asia, he gave many of his possessions away. One of his captains asked : "Sire, what do you retain for yourself ?" The answer of the monarch was : "I keep hope !"

"Aspire ! Break bounds !
Endeavour to be good,
And better still, and best !
Success is nought :
Endeavour's all."

III

IF ONLY THERE BE LIFE!

COMPARING an equestrian statue by a rival with one just executed by himself, an ancient sculptor picked out in the former certain faults. These, however, were all nullified by his frank admission at the end : “ But this beast *lives*, and mine is dead.” We are willing to make many allowances if only there be *life*. “ A living dog,” as the Preacher so aptly said, “ is better than a dead lion.”

A congregation will pardon not a few defects in a sermon if only it be alive. While there is life in the pulpit, there is hope ; and sometimes only then. A discourse may be commonplace in thought and hackneyed in allusion ; but if the preacher has been like the artist who mixed his colours with his blood, his message will not return to him void. Longfellow is said to have cared little for the pulpit whose heart he could not hear beating. On a historic occasion Mrs Siddons so flung herself into the portrayal of a fictitious character that she completely overcame a notable tragedian who was acting with

her. He sobbed audibly upon the stage. Yet the epic of the Cross has been crooned as if it were but a genealogy in Kings or Chronicles ; and one has heard the offer of the gospel so perfunctorily made that one has almost got up and shouted “Fire !” A caller at a certain manse, one Saturday, was told by the minister’s wife that her husband could not be seen, because he was “buried in his sermon.” “I happened to hear that sermon next day,” the caller told a friend, “and the lady was right.” St Paul wrote to the Colossians : “Let your speech be seasoned with salt.” And though oratorical splendour be lacking, this quality of vitality —this “salt”—will achieve genuine results. When the Romans listened to Cicero, they said : “He speaks like a god” ; but when the Athenians listened to Demosthenes, they said : “Come, let us march against Philip.”

The same thing is true of Prayer. The worshippers of Baal, who tried to overthrow Elijah, prayed from morning until noon ; and the Ephesian devotees of Diana cried to their goddess “about the space of two hours.” The Buddhist employs prayer-wheels which turn out his devotions by the mile. Early Puritans prayed by the hour-glass ; and Scots Presbyterians used to have in their public services what was termed “the long prayer,” which no minister who valued

his orthodoxy dared to shorten. Behind these forms lay the belief that elaborateness counted much, and reality—"life"—mattered little. The truth is precisely the reverse. And because that has been forgotten, the House of God has been at times turned into a dormitory, not for bodies but for souls. To move God, a prayer must first move the suppliant. "Limp Prayers," ran an advertisement in the window of a shop. The reference was only to the binding of the little book ; but some prayers are limp in spirit too. It should not be cause for wonder that they receive no response from God. The wonder would be if they did.

St John says that it was the *life* of Jesus—neither His doctrine nor His worship—which was "the light of men" ; and the supreme requirement is always this master-quality of sincerity, reality, and "life." The word "sincere" literally means "without wax" ; and it suggests a figure which is all of a piece, with nothing deceptive because pasted together with wax. Would that all Christian character were thus "sincere" ! While crossing the frontier, Gustave Doré found himself without his passport. He gave his name, but his identity was still questioned. Thereupon he seized a piece of paper, sketched the officials who were in doubt, and handed them their likenesses. "See now who I am," he said :

and the officers confessed themselves satisfied. "Only Doré could do that," they exclaimed. That is the sort of evidence wanted from professed followers of Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts, we read of one, Barnabas, who stands on the threshold of the Church as a great apostle of reality and "life." The early Christians seem to have grown dispirited. But Barnabas reinspired them. When we meet him first, it is stated that his name means "the son of consolation." It is better rendered "the son of encouragement." He was a massive and genuine embodiment of the gospel which he preached; and in the phrase of Froude, he created "an epidemic of nobleness" in the nascent Church. The Greeks of Lystra called him Jupiter, doubtless with the colossal Olympian Zeus—the statue of Phidias—in their minds. And this man—named from the king of all the gods—was a mighty influence on the side of Christ, because he radiated the Christian life. He recalls the character of Professor Drummond. "How was it that your Church tolerated Drummond?" asked John Morley of a Scots minister who was his guest. "Were his views not a bit advanced?" "Well, you see," was the reply, "we never took him seriously as a thinker. We regarded him rather as a religious influence." "How did he show that?" asked

Morley. "For one thing," answered the minister, "he cleansed Edinburgh University life for several years." "Ah!" remarked Morley thoughtfully, "that's better than being a thinker." The life always counts. When Christianity genuinely functions thus, the Kingdom will not lag.

IV

FACING THE FUTURE

A PRISONER was being examined before the Spanish Inquisition. At first he replied to the questions put to him with comparatively little premeditation ; but his ear soon detected the scratching of a pen behind a curtain on the farther side of the room, and it flashed upon him that an unseen reporter was at work, and that every word he uttered was being taken down. He became a good deal more careful after that.

The story of our lives is being similarly recorded, and the books are being placed one by one in the great library of God.

The idea that such a life-record is possible has been considered fanciful—a pious imagination ; but modern knowledge throws unexpected and helpful light upon it. Through sound, the telephone, and “ wireless,” our universe has become to-day a vast whispering gallery. Every word spoken and every deed done may now be conceived as making an impress upon some solemn register of God which is ready, at His bidding, to record it. Each man imputes himself ; and

the books stand fixed and legible. When we pass to the final reckoning, a precise transcript of our earthly life shall await us, to be read with shame and confusion of face, or with humble joy and gratitude, in the great Doomsday world which is beyond.

THE POT OF MAGIC HERBS

One of the legends of the Round Table tells of a witch who wished to make her child supremely wise. Accordingly she put magic herbs into a pot to boil, in order to bathe the child's eyes with the decoction. She set a boy to stir the pot while she was absent. As he stirred a passing raven dropped a twig into the pot and spattered three drops of the liquid into the lad's eyes. Immediately all the future opened before his vision, and the boy became supremely wise. Could three drops of that all-revealing decoction get into the eyes of each to-day, would they continue in the same paths and pursuits as those of former years ?

Demosthenes, while delivering an oration, was disturbed by an uproar, but secured silence by the following digression. A man hired an ass to carry him to Athens. At noon the sun grew so hot that both owner and rider wanted to rest in the shadow of the ass. This caused a dispute. The owner said : " You hired my ass, but not

its shadow." The rider retorted: "Since I hired your ass, its shadow must be mine also." At this point Demosthenes stopped speaking and made to step down from the rostrum. So eager, however, were the people to know the outcome of the controversy that they pressed him to continue. "You have no mind," he said, "to listen to things of moment to the State; but you are all ears to hear about the shadow of an ass."

How trifling sometimes are the interests which we allow to dominate our lives! Henley's brilliant epitaph upon a celebrated artist sums up the history of many a soul. "He coined himself into guineas, and so, like the reckless and passionate spendthrift he was, he flung away his genius and his life in handfuls, till nothing else was left him but the silence and the decency of death."

THE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE

All this is gathered into especial seriousness when one remembers the brevity of human life. The shortness of man's life is indeed a commonplace, worn thin by poets and moralists in every age; but the pressing occupations of passing days tend to make us forget or discount it.

"Life is swift: the years fly by,
A story told: and then we die."

From the Pyramids forty centuries look down ; but where are the builders ? Dinted swords and rusty coats of mail hang in our museums ; but where are the hands that wielded the swords, and the frames that donned the coats of mail ? Man's life is only a fleeting shadow—a fading flower—in comparison with such products of his own handiwork. Well might the Psalmist pray : “ So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Some people will number almost everything *except* their days. They reckon up their cattle, houses, furnishings, investments ; but at their *days* the inventory stops.

“ So here hath been dawning
Another blue day ;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ? ”

No VAIN LAMENTINGS !

Regrets for the past, however, make but a poor equipment with which to set forth upon the pilgrimage of the future. The story of 1926 demands a resolute forward look upon its frontispiece. An observer of nature noticed a nest fallen and scattered upon the ground. It was a saddening and pitiful sight. But, glancing up, he saw the birds busy at another nest, intended to take its place. This is an eloquent parable

38 The Secret of a Warm Heart

for human life. "Days are lost lamenting o'er lost days."

"Then as ye sit about your embers,
Call not to mind the fled Decembers ;
But think on those that are t'appear—
The daughters of the instant year."

The word "saunter" is said to have a rather significant derivation. In the days when pilgrimages to the Holy Land were popular, impostors who begged for money to go "*à la sainte terre*" arose, and became very troublesome. It transpired that they never went at all ; and decent people were so disgusted with them that a new word was coined and they were dubbed "saunterers." There are still many of the breed in life. No ideals rebuke and redeem their haphazard days. They merely lounge along.

Others again *have* a purpose, but one which is bounded by "this bank and shoal of time." On the threshold of life, a youth was asked what he hoped to do in coming years.

"I shall take up my profession," he replied, "and settle down."

"What then ? "

"I shall try to earn a competence for myself and my dependants."

"What then ? "

"I shall then be getting old."

"What then ? "

“ Well, in due time, I suppose that I shall die.”

“ What then ? ”

The lad’s ideal had never stretched so far as that.

AN INFINITE IDEAL

In Bunyan’s “Holy War,” there is a character called “ Mr Get i’ the Hundred and Lose i’ the Shire.” A “ shire ” is, of course, a county, and a “ hundred ” is the old name for such a portion of the county as we should call a parish. What Bunyan meant, therefore, by this man’s long name was that a man may grasp at an immediate advantage and miss a larger good. He may get the world that now is, and lose the world that is to come. The only safe plan is to choose an ideal whose riches and resources are eternal. And such an ideal is found alone in Christ. “ O Lord,” wrote Arthur Henry Hallam, “ I have tried how this thing and that thing will fit my spirit ; but I have found nothing to rest on here, for nothing hath any rest itself. O Centre and Source of Light and Strength—O Fulness of all things—I come back and join myself to Thee.”

Loyalty to such an ideal will alone make beautiful the story of our lives. Even Seneca put it well. “ O Neptune ! you may save me if you will ; you may sink me if you will ; but whatever happens, I shall keep my rudder true.”

And faithful following of the Christ will daily enlarge and ennable us.

An ancient form of torture was a cell which seemed to the prisoner at first comfortable and roomy, but which gradually contracted. As the sides drew closer, the victim was slowly crushed to death. The exact reverse is the miracle of Jesus Christ. Thoughts, feelings, aspirations, all become exalted, and we go on "from strength to strength." Through Him, the aim set forth by John Ruskin is brought within our grasp : "Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close. Then let every one of these short lives have its sure record of some kindly thing done for others, some goodly strength or knowledge gained for ourselves."

MAKING LIFE LESS DIFFICULT FOR OTHERS

The tale of the year will be poor, if it holds not for all a chapter recording many words and deeds of love. George Eliot said : "What do we live for, but to make life less difficult for each other ?" And it is frequently proved that men cannot love to live unless they live to love ! The great Campanile at Florence is inlaid with glowing figures and seems a perfect thing ; but it lacks a gilded pinnacle on its topmost pyramid, and so is incomplete. A true life needs love to

make it perfect. "The wealth of a man," said Carlyle, "is the number of things which he loves and blesses—which he is loved and blessed by." We never get rich really by laying *up*. We get rich by laying *out*.

A poor man applied to John Wesley for help. Wesley pointed him to the text: "Trust in the Lord"; and above it he placed a pound. The man afterwards said that he had often considered the text, but he had never found such a helpful expository note upon it!

Let such a spirit of generosity pervade the days that are in front.

"Be mine, I pray, to go the second mile,
Do better than I need to, all the while."

A child once asked: "In what part of heaven is God going to put the people who are good but not kind?" That there are such people is a curious fact; but one does meet them now and then. For a genuine Christian life, something more than mere righteousness is needed. St Peter says: "Add to your . . . godliness, brotherly kindness." In his book "The Greatest Thing in the World," Professor Drummond asks, "Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things?" And without such doing, Christian character must always remain incom-

plete. A smile may be a great comfort to some bereaved heart ; an insignificant courtesy may reassure somebody deeply discouraged ; a hearty greeting or even a friendly look may redeem a man from loneliness and exile of spirit.

Now IS THE TIME !

How apt people are to defer to what they think will be "a more convenient season" their words and acts of consideration and kindness towards others ! But the place which is paved with good intentions—according to the proverb—is not heaven ; and the time for loving sacrifice toward others is now. Nothing is more futile than post-mortem help. A struggling actress died from starvation in a London garret ; and to her funeral flowers sufficient to have paid for her food for several weeks were sent.

"Now is the time ! Ah, friend, no longer wait
To scatter loving smiles and words of cheer
To those around whose lives are now so drear.
They may not need you in some coming year.
Now is the time ! "

With a lofty ideal, then, and the spirit of kindness and love, all may bravely enter upon the pathway of coming years. Their stories of the past may have been blurred—the tale may

have been but poorly told—but all things may yet be new.

“He came to my desk with a quivering lip—
The lesson was done—
‘Dear teacher, I want a new leaf,’ he said,
‘I have spoiled this one.’
In place of the leaf so stained and blotted
I gave him a new one all unspotted,
And into his sad eyes smiled—
‘Do better now, my child.’
• • • • •

I went to the Throne with a quivering soul—
The old year was done—
‘Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me ?
I have spoiled this one !’
He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,
And gave me a new leaf all unspotted,
And into my sad heart smiled—
‘Do better now, my child.’ ”

V

ERIC LIDDELL'S MOTTO

“CHRIST FOR THE WORLD,
FOR THE WORLD NEEDS CHRIST”

WHEN Eric Liddell, the celebrated athlete and Olympic champion, left this country to take up missionary work in China, his departure was made the occasion of a remarkable and moving demonstration. His fellow-students of Edinburgh University hauled his gaily decorated carriage through the streets; and when the station was reached, the crowd in response to his own lead sang the hymn, “Jesus shall reign.” In a farewell address, before the train steamed out of the station, the young missionary said the motto of all should be:

“CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD
NEEDS CHRIST.”

It was a thrilling incident. And the farewell message long rang in the ears of those who heard it, and—epigrammatic in its terseness—said itself over and over again in their hearts. In brief compass, it enshrines the basic truth

of the imperialism—the cosmopolitanism—of Christ. His field is the world.

Religions may be roughly divided into two classes. There are those which are national and local, and those which are catholic and universal. The old Grecian deities, Zeus, Apollo, Minerva, for example, were so twined into Grecian history and sentiment that they could never have had place in any other nation's faith. But a religion like Buddhism, which to-day has more nominal adherents than Christianity itself, is capable of adjustment to any race or time. Essentially pessimistic in its teaching, of course, it seems incapable of any effective world-appeal. To say that life is weeping, whether a silk or a cotton handkerchief be used to catch the tears, and that the sooner such life is extinguished the better, is a poor evangel to offer to mankind. But Buddhism, with all its defects, has at least a non-local—a universal—sweep.

And pre-eminently is this so with Christianity. Meeting no local or sectarian wants, but the *needs* of universal man, it is capable of adaptation to the entire world. And this is due to the universal and cosmopolitan character of Christ. His faith can domicile itself in every quarter of the globe, because its Founder was trammelled by no provincialisms whatsoever, and His thoughts were eternal. He belonged to

the universe, like the sunshine and the air. "There has been but one Son of Man," said Frederick Robertson of Brighton; and Principal Fairbairn used to declare: "Christ is not a single Person; He is Collective Man." Perhaps we commonly talk of the *Crown* of Christ. But when St John was lifted up into his Patmos-vision, he saw that the Lord had on His head "*many crowns*." Diverse and many-sided are the supremacies which are linked together in Him.

Born of a race than whom none is more sharply differentiated from others by temper and endowment—a people whose ideal has ever been to remain separate, if landless, among all the nations of the earth—Jesus broke down every wall of racial distinction. He was not a Jew. Standing at the confluence of three civilisations—Hebrew, Greek, Roman—He was absorbed by none. When Ptolemy built Pharos, the ancient lighthouse, which was one of the seven wonders of the world, he insisted on his name being placed upon it; but Sostratus, the architect, felt that the king, who only paid the money, should not get all the credit while he got none. Accordingly he put the king's name on the front in plaster, while he cut his own name in the granite below. The sea chipped away the plaster bit by bit; but the name "Sostratus" in the granite remained.

In like manner all other human names have been slowly superseded in the fretting wash of time ; but Christ is the eternal modern, the contemporary of all the ages, and the generations only overtake Him slowly. "Everything in Christ," said Napoleon, in his self-conscious way, "astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. His ideas and His sentiments, the truths which He announces, are not explained either by human observation, or by the nature of things. Everything is above me." No law of heredity or environment embraces Him. "Christ reigns to-day as no god in Rome, as no deity in Greece, as no divinity in Egypt ever reigned, over civilised, free, progressive men."

"Oh, ye vain, false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore !
And I dash down this old chalice
Whence libations ran of yore—
See ! the wine crawls in the dust,
Worm-like as your glories must,
Since Pan is dead ! "

This catholicity and cosmopolitanism of Christ it is that rings loudly in Eric Liddell's farewell words :

"CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD
NEEDS CHRIST."

It is one of the plainest lessons of history

that Christ has been the most potent culture-force in the world. There is a statue of David Livingstone which shows him with the Bible in one hand and an axe in the other. And every one knows how the Teuton and Saxon savageries of an earlier time have been transformed into the better Europe of to-day, by the influence of the Word made flesh. Science tells us that ages ago horrible creatures swarmed and struggled in the primeval slime. As the world advanced, however, they were replaced by mild and beautiful forms of life. So Christ has destroyed passions and barbarisms far more revolting than the monsters of the antediluvian epoch, and He has infinitely exalted and sweetened human conditions.

Who was it that dissipated the gloom of the once dark continent of Africa ? Not the Chartered Company but the missionary of Christ. It is boasted that trade follows the flag. But the flag first follows the missionary. Not till then can trade follow the flag. The riches of Central Africa, of the Zambezi and the Congo—their first exploration and their present commercial value—are directly due to missionary enterprise. Sir Harry Johnston, a former Governor of Uganda, said : “ I view with the strongest approval the great work of Missions in Uganda.” And he added that, if he had the funds, he would “ endow Missions as organised school-boards for

savages." Sir Rivers Thomson, a recent Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, said that "Christian missions have done more for India than all other agencies combined."

Then the admission made by Charles Darwin may be recalled. Having visited Patagonia, he had pronounced its people irreclaimably degraded. Soon afterwards Christian missionaries began work among the population. And when, on a second visit, Darwin saw the results of their labours, he frankly acknowledged that previously he had been wrong ; and it is said that he sent a contribution to the Mission funds. This, at all events, is what he wrote : " Dishonesty, intemperance, impurity, have to a great extent been lessened by the introduction of Christianity into heathen lands. It is the basest ingratitude on the part of writers to forget this. Were it their lot to stand in the expectation of suffering shipwreck on some unknown coast, they would direct a fervent prayer to Heaven that the teaching of the missionaries might have reached its inhabitants."

Such testimonies lend unique force to Eric Liddell's farewell message, as the young Olympic champion set out to carry to China the Christian Evangel.

**"CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD
NEEDS CHRIST."**

Contemporaneously with the Augustan Age of Rome, there existed in a remote island of Europe a barbarism peculiarly gross. Cicero, writing to a friend, says : "A slave-ship has arrived in the Tiber with slaves from this island ; but do not choose any of them. They are unfit for use." The remote island whose slaves were "unfit for use" was no other than Britain ! How can we explain this astounding change ? An Indian chief once asked Queen Victoria the secret of Britain's greatness. She silently handed him a copy of the Bible. How did Britain get this Bible ? Through the missionary. There was St Paul obeying his vision at Troas, and crossing the Hellespont to Europe in his fragile coracle. There was St Augustine bringing God's Word to our English ancestors, who swung bludgeons and strode in skins. There was St Columba preaching the love of Christ amid the heather and glens of Scotland. From these missionaries and their successors we must date the glories of Britain to-day.

Fable tells of a tree which, as it fell groaning to the earth, discovered that the handle of the axe which cut it down was made from its own wood. Is that not just what those who seek to limit the cosmopolitanism of Christ really do ? The faith of Jesus has made them great ; but they deny to others the Excalibur to which they

owe all themselves. They bring down the eagle with an arrow feathered out of its own wing ! For there are those who quote Kipling's dictum : " Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet " ; and who superciliously ask why Christian Britain should foist its Western faith upon the widely differing races of the East ? Are they actually unaware that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and nursed in an Eastern mother's arms ? By birth, Christ was as foreign to Britain as Japan is. And, as has well been said, " There is something inept, cool, if not ridiculous, in Britons viewing Christianity as an Anglo-Saxon property and not suited to remote alien peoples, when we, a foreign race, owe everything to it ! " Christ is really the Universal Man, suited equally to all.

There is a poem which tells of four blind Hindus who went to see an elephant. One leaned against its trunk, and reported that it was like a serpent. Another leaned against its body, and said it was like a wall. Another got hold of its tail and described it as like a rope. The fourth ran against its tusk and declared it was like a spear. So there are objectors who have never really seen Christianity in India or Africa—" P. and O. theologians "—who talk contemptuously of the imperialism of Christ. Their criticisms are as worthless as those of the

blind Hindus upon the elephant. And Eric Liddell's farewell message is still a slogan that thrills and compels our loyalty :

“CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD
NEEDS CHRIST.”

An artist was asked to paint a dying Church. Did he set upon the canvas a small and feeble congregation in a ruined building ? Quite the reverse. He depicted a stately edifice with rich pulpit, organ, and windows. But in the porch there was hung a small box, with the words above it : “Collection for Foreign Missions” ; and just over where the contributions should have gone, the slit was blocked by a cobweb ! That was the artist’s conception of a dying Church. And it was profoundly true. The missionary spirit is the very essence of the Church’s life. Take away its “Marching Orders,” and its meaning and history are alike stultified. The words which Whittier whispered just before he died enshrine the supreme duty of all true followers of Christ : “ Give my love to the world.”

An eccentric draughtsman, discussing the unsatisfactoriness of the pictured faces of Christ with a friend, snatched up a crayon and rapidly sketched a woman with a broom in one hand and a lighted candle in the other. A look of

intense anxiety was on her face. "It is a fine representation of the woman seeking for the lost bit of silver," said the friend. "You don't understand my picture," was the quick response. "That is my conception of the Christ."

It was a noble conception. A searching Christ! Seeking in dark, dusty corners for His own!

In a foreign city there is a bridge on which are engraved twelve figures of Christ, each depicting a different aspect. The country folk, travelling in the morning to the city, bow to them as they pass. The stockman regards the image of Christ the Shepherd, the artisan, Christ the Carpenter, the market gardener, Christ the Sower, the ailing and infirm, Christ the Physician, the fisherman, Christ the Pilot. Christ is One, but each finds in Him the answer to his special need. It is this universal, cosmopolitan Christ—for whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female—that glows in Eric Liddell's thrilling message :

**"CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, FOR THE WORLD
NEEDS CHRIST."**

VI

THE CONIES AND THE ROCKS A STUDY IN COMPENSATION

“THE conies are but a feeble folk,” says a verse in the Book of Proverbs, “yet make they their houses in the rocks.” It is a striking offset to their defencelessness, a generous compensation. And the same balancing of feebleness and power may frequently be observed. “Nature,” writes Emerson, “hates monopolies and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their highest tossing than the varieties of condition tend to equalise themselves.” Creatures which seem to have less chance are found to be armed with some subtle quality enabling them to foil their adversaries and hold their own. “Carlyle, in his blackest visions of shams and humbugs among human kind,” declares Henry Drummond, “never saw anything so finished in hypocrisy as the naturalist finds in every tropical forest. There are to be found, not singly, but in tens of thousands, creatures whose very appearance down to the minutest spot and wrinkle is an affront to truth,

whose every attitude is a pose for a purpose, and whose life is a consistent lie. Before these masterpieces of deception the most ingenious of human impositions is transparent." Drummond, one feels, exaggerated in imputing conscious fraud to nature ; but subtlety there is throughout, balanced against its strength. The mottlings of ptarmigan and grouse so resemble the ground that you can hardly see them at close range. The trout so resembles the stream-bed that you cannot see it at all. Certain animals can change their colour too, and in circumstances of danger can look like dead twigs ; until they amaze you by getting up and walking away. Where are the great comedians beside these consummate actors of the forest and the field ?

Remarkable compensations, also, may be noted in the sphere of human life. Deaf people usually have special quickness of eyesight ; while the blind frequently reveal an uncanny capacity of hearing. And when both eye-gate and ear-gate are closed the sense of touch sometimes becomes so exquisitely developed that we can converse through that organ alone.

History, too, abounds with similar compensations. Its study, indeed, has produced sceptics ; but that has always been because they took too narrow a view. In order to appreciate a painting

one has to stand back a little ; and the same thing is true in judging of history. To look at it through mere chinks of time may even relegate its Golden Age to a distant past. But God makes up His historical designs in a kind of envelope or husk, which does not fall off at once, which yet, when it does fall off, reveals a piece of ripened fruit. The seventh century seems a relapse on the fifth, but the ninth was an advance on both. We have lost much, but we have gained more. We have abandoned some symbols of religion, but we have reached a far deeper insight into its substance and its spirit. The twentieth century received the horse, but it bequeaths the motor-car and the aeroplane. It received the beacon, but it bequeaths wireless. It received pain in manifold forms, but it bequeaths the triumphs of modern surgery.

In our individual experience there are striking instances of the working of compensation. Professor Huxley had a favourite simile which once enjoyed a considerable vogue. He compared life to a game of chess, in which each man is pitted against an unseen player, inexorably just, and meeting ignorance and neglect with final and certain overthrow. The simile is suggestive, but one wonders whether it includes everything. Emerson tells of a minister who preached that

justice is never executed in this world. The wicked are usually successful, and the good miserable. But in the next world these anomalies will be put right. A balance will be struck. Justice will at last be done. Well, there is probably some element of truth in the contention ; for the future will bring surprises to most of us. But to say that the wicked are ever really successful or the good miserable in this life is to set up a very low standard of success and misery. It is to reduce goodness to a mere policy, and weigh it merely in the scales of the market. Success and misery must be estimated in terms of conscience and the values of the soul. And judged at such a tribunal no wrongdoer ever was or ever could be successful in this world. God's law of compensation is too much for him. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," Arthur Dimmesdale keeps his guilty secret locked in his heart for years, shared only by the partner of his sin ; but at length he can bear the torture no longer. He puts himself into the pillory, and welcomes the shame of exposure, in order to quiet his aching soul. If sin be only a mistake of judgment, no one could ever be driven to such a course. But so far from being "a sentence in brackets," to be forgotten when one returns to the safe stride of virtue, moral evil disturbs the whole balancing of things, dims the

sunlight, destroys the fragrance of the flowers, blurs the smile of wife and child.

“ Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous !
Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it ;
The winds did sing it to me ; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced
The name of Prosper.”

So, too, the good are successful even here. They may not gain the material prizes, but they always gain the inward and spiritual joys. “ There are some things which I will not do,” said M‘Kinley, “ even for the Presidency.” The good man may win no such outward laurels ; but he gains a clean record and an honoured name. And while the outward laurels quickly fade, the clean record and the honoured name endure. That is what the proverb means, “ Virtue is its own reward.” The man who does right loses something, maybe ; but he gains immeasurably more. Crowned by conscience, he can despise alike the plaudits and execrations of the crowd. When the lamps are turned on, in broad daylight, in a train, it may appear a wanton waste at first ; but when the train plunges the next moment into a tunnel the light is very welcome. One can still discern the faces of one’s friends. The lamps of loyalty and self-sacrifice lit within one’s heart may at first seem of little use ; but when the dark places of life

have to be travelled they will be very welcome. To look back from the bed of mortal anguish and see one's 'scutcheon unsmirched, the Kingdom advanced, the world left a little better than one found it—next to the consolations of Grace, that will make the very face of death seem kind.

Amid human sorrow there are also wonderful compensations. Somebody has said that one of the sweetest occupations in heaven will be to trace out these, as they have permeated our lives on earth. "With the passing of the years," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, "there grows more and more upon me that belief in the kindness of the scheme of things and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation." Blind men have seen God better than people who possessed their sight. Deaf men have heard God better than people who possessed their hearing. Sufferers have risen to God only when they were laid upon their backs by sickness. Even death has been balanced by imperishable hopes. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Describing the funeral of Robert Browning, Burne-Jones remarked: "I would have given anything for a banner or two, or for the sound of a trumpet." That is the supreme triumph

60 The Secret of a Warm Heart

of divine compensation. "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." And feeble mortals may also find an eternal habitation in a rock.

"Rock of ages, cleft for me !
Let me hide myself in Thee."

VII

CHRIST AND SOCRATES

THE fact that Socrates has nowhere been mentioned by St Paul has frequently occasioned surprise. Socrates was born more than four hundred years before St Paul, and since the Apostle belonged to the University town of Tarsus, in which Greek learning would touch him deeply, he must have heard much of the Athenian sage who was martyred in the cause of truth. St Paul, doubtless, had early become familiar with the historic facts, and had meditated much upon the memorable sacrifice, and while preaching in the market-place at Athens, he could scarcely fail to recall poignantly that on this very spot Socrates had been derided as “a vain babbler”—the same indignity which he was now suffering himself. It was a striking irony of history. Yet, as the morning dispenses with the star, and he who has beheld the Matterhorn thinks little of Ben Nevis, St Paul’s entire horizon is occupied, not with Socrates, but with Christ.

“Christ ! I am Christ’s, and let the name suffice you ;
Aye, for me too He greatly hath sufficed.

Lo, with no winning words I would entice you :

Paul hath no honour and no friend but Christ !”

Among the early Christians, however, Socrates holds a high place, and is generally regarded as the father of moral philosophy. Justin Martyr boldly claims him as a Christian before Christ. “Socrates knew Christ in part,” he says, “for Christ is the personal appearance of the Reason which dwells in every man.” “Yet,” Justin is quick to add, in words which recall a famous saying of Napoleon, “Socrates has never given any man such faith that he would die for Socratic teaching. But for Christ, not only philosophers but artisans will go to death.” Clement of Alexandria also declares that since all history is one, the quest of the Greeks for wisdom was as much a schoolmaster leading them to Christ as the Law had been to the Jews. It was indeed a nobler philosophy of history than that which holds—

“That to no mortal
Heaven e’er oped its mystic portal ;
Gave no dream or revelation,
Save to one peculiar nation.”

In comparison with Christ, however, the teaching and character of Socrates are inevitably defective. Socrates, for instance, called men to

knowledge, while Christ summoned men to faith. The philosophy of Socrates is not so much a body of doctrines as a spirit of inquiry after truth. One of his disciples—he closely resembled Christ in his way of gathering disciples—consulted the Delphic Oracle and asked if anyone was wiser than Socrates. The reply was “none.” Puzzled at first, since he knew he had no great wisdom, Socrates soon found that here lay the very secret of his wisdom. He knew his own ignorance. Thenceforward he believed he had been given a divine mission to teach men their own ignorance and lead them to genuine knowledge. This knowledge, he held, was virtue, and for its attainment the most needful thing was that childlike spirit which, as Lord Bacon says, is the key both to the kingdom of science and the kingdom of heaven. It need not be said that Christ sought to redeem mankind not through knowledge of truth but through personal faith in Himself.

Socrates believed in one supreme Divinity, Maker of all things, Creator of all mankind, Governor among the nations, perfectly wise, just, and good. In his demonstrations of the existence of this Being, as we have them recorded by Xenophon, we seem to be sitting at the feet of Bishop Butler himself. Yet the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood, as Jesus taught it, is

not in any way developed. Socrates, however, believed himself to be under the constant guidance of a benevolent divine voice, which warned him of danger and kept him in the right way. All might have the same guidance, he thought, and his constant prayer was that God would give him, not riches, pleasure, or power, which might as likely prove a bane as a blessing, but what was best for him. God alone knew, he held, what was for his true and highest good.

Like Plato his disciple, Socrates believed in Immortality. His faith in it might be called the controlling principle of his life, and it enabled him to meet death with cheerful composure, assured that it was God's will and the consummation of his mission, and that it was better for him to die than to live. "Bury my body as you please," he said to his friends, "but do not mourn as if you were burying Socrates. Think of me rather as gone to be with the wise and good, and with God the fountain of wisdom and goodness, in that world where alone wisdom is to be found." Socrates indeed came very near to the Christian doctrine of Immortality. Yet it was not from the prison, where Socrates drank the cup of hemlock, but from the open and empty grave of Jesus Christ, that our enduring belief in immortality has sprung.

The end of Socrates is one of the finest memories of human history. Charged with teaching false gods and corrupting the youth of Athens, he was condemned, by a small majority of the senate, to die by poison. In the twilight of the fateful day, having spent several hours in tranquil converse with his wife and friends, and having bidden them remember to give a cock he owed to *Æsculapius*, he drank the poison and gently expired. Yet this martyrdom for truth, in an age whose whole mental vision Socrates had outgrown, may be too lightly compared with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The instinct of Rousseau, sceptic though he was, taught him this. "What prejudice," he says, "what blindness must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary. If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." And it is said that Voltaire once wrote in the margin of another elaborate comparison: "You forget the Agony in the garden." The Passion of our Lord, at all events, stands in a category by itself. Socrates himself would have aspired to no higher honour than that of being a forerunner of Christ among the Greeks. To that honour he is justly entitled, while the power of his life and teaching is still felt in the thought and faith of all Christian nations.

VIII

JOHN G. PATON

WHAT David Livingstone was to Africa John G. Paton was to the South Seas. A stately and picturesque figure and a missionary hero in the truest sense of the term, Paton toiled for upwards of forty years with amazing courage and endless self-sacrifice among the far-distant New Hebrides ; and the comparative civilisation and the numerous evidences of Christianisation which are manifest throughout the thirty islands forming his parish are the result of his prolonged and devoted labour.

John G. Paton was born in a cottage on the farm of Braehead, in the Dumfriesshire parish of Kirkmahoe, on 24th May 1824. His "Autobiography," which was published in 1889 and had a large circulation—in 1894 he gave £1000, which was a part of its profit, towards the further evangelisation of the New Hebrides—records in most readable form many of his early struggles to gain an education and equipment for missionary work. From his home—which, he tells us, consisted of a "but," a "ben," and a

“mid-room”—he bravely set out to walk to Glasgow, and was employed for a time as an agent of Glasgow City Mission at the salary of £40 per annum. Meantime he studied at the University and at the Reformed Presbyterian Divinity Hall; and in spite of some opposition from his friends, he decided to offer himself for foreign missionary service. It was in 1858 that he sailed from Greenock for the New Hebrides, and four months and fourteen days later, under a tropical sun, he landed at Aneityum and began his great work. When he started, the people were all cannibals and absolutely naked. Their condition was no further advanced than that of the dwellers of the Stone Age. A world of progress surrounded them, but it meant nothing to them. They caught glimpses of some ocean liner’s smoke on the horizon, but they could not realise in the least what it signified. They were frequently at war, and they always ate their prisoners. It was a religious superstition that they should do this—a superstition which still lingers in places not entirely Christianised, and where heathen practices survive.

Paton’s work made wonderful progress, and his noble character left everywhere a deep impression upon the savage people of the islands. Some idea of the success which crowned his labours may be gathered from the reports he

was able to give, when he returned home in 1900, and toured the British-speaking world in the interests of his beloved islanders. There were then nearly 20,000 converts, 300 churches with schools, and 300 native preachers and teachers. These last were superintended by twenty-five trained and educated British missionaries and five British lay Helpers. In addition to the wives of missionaries, there were three lady assistants, one being a graduate of Sydney University; and a Training Institute for Teachers, together with a Hospital. To the suggestion that some of his converts might be what are called in India "Bazaar Christians"—Christians who are only out to get what they can from the missionaries—Dr Paton indignantly replied that the native Christians of the New Hebrides were even more sincere than we are ourselves. "As soon as they embrace Christianity," he said, "they become remarkably changed, even if they are not what we term converted or born again. They at once adopt clothing, they have family worship morning and evening, and they ask a blessing on their meals. Can we say that here?" "I see so great a change in that respect," the old Scotsman continued, "every time I come home. A mere murmured invocation, a kind of mystical invocation of which you cannot gather the sense,

a muttering, as though people were ashamed to acknowledge God as the supreme Giver of all good things—that is what asking a blessing means in England to-day; and as for family worship, it appears to have died out altogether. But our native Christians are never ashamed to give God the glory in all things."

One of the most striking results of Paton's work was the practical banishment of war among the native tribes. Their attitude to strangers also became revolutionised. When a ship was wrecked on a heathen island, the natives used to swarm down and murder all on board. On a partly Christianised island, a vessel was wrecked, but the Christian chief gathered his people, protected the crew and their property, and housed and fed them till they were taken off by another ship. Paton found among the islanders a heathen system of sacrifice and of propitiating the gods which helped them to understand his teaching; and he came upon traditions of a Creation, a Fall, and a Flood in each island. They had a distinct idea of the whole moral law, and of the Ten Commandments, too, with the exception of the Lord's Day. Taking a statesmanlike view of his beloved parish, Paton believed that the New Hebrides could only become permanently prosperous if British influence was established in them. The

slave traffic and the traffic in intoxicating liquor had reduced the population from 150,000 to half that number in fifty years. When the venerable missionary came home in 1901, he carried a petition to King Edward, signed by 106 head chiefs, imploring him to annex their islands and save them from extinction.

Missionary work in the New Hebrides was beset by constant perils for Dr Paton, and at least forty attempts were made on his life. Scarcely an island in his great parish lacks its lowly grave, the mute memorial of some missionary's wife, husband, or child, who fell in the long fight. During the first twenty years of Paton's residence, no less than seven missionaries were martyred, among whom was Bishop Coleridge Patteson. "We are all near one another," said Paton, "the centre of the Anglican work being the Solomon group, and of ours the New Hebrides. Selwyn and Patteson were sainted men, beloved by all, white and coloured." Dr Paton emerged, however, unscathed, and making Melbourne his headquarters, he continued to labour for his beloved islanders by lecturing and letter-writing, until his death at a venerable age. His brother, the late Dr James Paton of St Paul's, Glasgow, edited his "Autobiography," and was a devoted supporter of his work. Of Robert Louis Stevenson's words, written from

Samoa, the result of John G. Paton's labours forms an eloquent illustration: "I suppose I am in the position of many other persons. I had conceived a great prejudice against Missions in the South Seas. And I had no sooner come there than that prejudice was first reduced and then annihilated. Those who deblatterate against Missions have only one thing to do—to come and see them on the spot."

IX

SAINT COLUMBA

OF princely descent, like many of the Celtic saints, St Columba was born at Gartan, in the uplands of Donegal, near Letterkenny, on 7th December 521. Christianity had already gained some footing among the Irish, and it was in a Christian home that the future apostle of Scotland first saw the light. He was educated in part under Finnian of Moville, and in part under Finnian of Clonard, from whose school not a few noble missionaries sprang. Columba proved an apt pupil. Ordained as deacon and then as priest, he early gave himself to missionary labours in his native country; and ere he left it, he had founded, among a still barbarous people, many religious houses. The chief of these were at Derry (545) and at Durrow (553). It was not till he was forty-two that the call to Scotland came.

The ancient Irish "Lives" give as the reason of Columba's expatriation from Ireland the necessity of doing penance for a sin which is said to have threatened his excommunication. His

clansmen, upon his call, had slain three thousand men of Meath in a tribal feud ; and Laisren, his soul-friend, counselled him that he must leave his country, and win as many lives for Christ in Pictland as he had been the means of destroying in Ireland. A nobler motive, however, probably led Columba to our shores. From an early date, men from northern Ireland had been coming over to settle in Argyllshire ; and by Columba's time a kingdom of Irishmen, ruled by his own relative, Conal, was established there. This kingdom—Dalriada—was prospering, when in 560 Brude, King of the Picts, marched against it, and inflicted upon it a crushing defeat. The peril of these Dalriad Scots, his countrymen, appealed irresistibly to Columba. With twelve disciples and some attendants, he sailed from Derry in 563, in a rude currach or skiff of wicker-work covered with hides, such as may still be seen on the west coast of Ireland. It is told that the little craft first touched at Oronsay, from which, however, the Irish coast-line was still visible. Columba, therefore, fearing lest that sight of home should stir a hunger in his followers' hearts, set out again, and after visiting the chief stronghold of his relative, Conal, on the mainland, settled with his little band on Iona. Bede says the historic island was presented to him by the Picts, but the Irish annalists claim the

credit of the gift for the Dalriad Scots. The approval of both would probably be sought, for safety's sake. After erecting a monastery on Iona, Columba set forth, not to fight the Picts who had vanquished his countrymen, but with the loftier purpose of winning them for Christ. The spirit of clanship being strong, the conversion of King Brude was necessary at the outset ; and Columba courageously traversed the valley where the Caledonian Canal now stretches, on his way to the stronghold of Brude at Inverness. His teaching and holy life—for many legendary miracles ascribed to him by his biographer may be dismissed—won the king, and ultimately his people. For thirty-four years Columba preached and toiled in Scotland. The message of Christianity had, of course, been first brought to our land by unknown Roman soldiers many years earlier ; and St Ninian's labours in Galloway also preceded those of St Columba. Still, Columba was the first to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the length and breadth of the country north of the Tay. He evangelised the Western Isles, the Orkneys, and the entire coast-line about Cape Wrath. And he it was—already manifestly recognised as the chief minister of the nascent Scottish Church—who crowned and consecrated King Aidan, successor to Conal, as monarch of the Scots, at Iona.

From Aidan sprang the main line of Scottish kings, and from him our sovereign to-day is descended.

The evening of Columba's life was passed in his island home, and the closing scene took place on 9th June 597. On the day before he died, the white horse used by the monks approached him as he sat by the roadside, and bent its head upon his bosom with sad eyes. It seemed to Columba an omen of death. He climbed the knoll which overlooked the monastery and its little farm, and lifting his hands in parting blessing, he spoke these words : " To this place, small and mean, not only the Kings of the Scots, but also rulers of strange nations, shall bring great and extraordinary honour." He then returned to his hut and continued transcribing the Psalter, finishing with the verse, " They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "Here," he said, " I must stop ; what follows let Baithne write." When the bell rang for midnight prayers, he hurried to the church ; but ere the brethren could join him he had fainted before the altar. Unable to speak, he feebly raised his hand in blessing, and with joy beaming in his face passed away.

Columba was lofty in stature, dignified in bearing, and imperious in temper. His voice is said to have been marvellously penetrating.

He loved the Word of God, and spent much time in studying and copying it. He gave much time also to prayer. By strenuous self-discipline he turned the natural forcefulness of his character into the exercises of piety and kindness. With the vision of the statesman, he spread over northern and western Scotland the system of monasteries which he brought from Ireland. These monasteries became centres of light and citadels of beneficence to the surrounding country, and their influence upon Scotland was far-reaching and permanent. According to Reeves, twenty-four religious foundations were dedicated to St Columba in Pictland, thirty-two in other parts of Scotland, and thirty-seven in Ireland. Three Latin hymns of considerable beauty are attributed to him, and are preserved in the ancient Irish *Liber Hymnorum*. Some Irish poems have also been ascribed to him.

X

CURIOS BIBLES

SOME noteworthy typographical blemishes and oddities of expression crept into early versions of the Bible, and frequently stamped their names upon the editions in which they were contained. A familiar example is the “Breeches Bible,” so called because the word in Gen. iii. 7, which the Authorised Version renders “aprons,” is translated “breeches.” This Bible was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and was published at Geneva in 1560 by English exiles there. Between 1560 and 1630 about two hundred editions of it were issued. The translation “breeches,” however, goes back to William Caxton’s “Golden Legend” (1483), which renders Gen. iii. 7, “they sewed figge leuis togyder in manner of brechis.”

Another odd Bible is the “Bug Bible,” printed in London in 1551. The title is derived from the translation in Psalm xci. 5, “So that thou shalt not nede to be afraid for any bugges by nighte.” The first complete Bible printed in the English language—that of Miles Coverdale, of date 1535—also contains this rendering. It

affords a good example of how the march of time affects the fashions of speech. Words which were once common may become unseemly. We still have "bogy" and "bugbear"; but in the time of Shakespeare the original substantive was quite respectable :

"Sir, spare your threats :
The bug which you would fright me with I seek."

A curious instance of the vagaries of translators is the "Treacle Bible." This version was issued in 1568, and derives the nickname from its rendering of Jer. viii. 22, "Is there not triacle in Gilead ? Is there no physition there ?" The Bible of Miles Coverdale, just referred to, has also this reading.

Then there is the "Rosin Bible," so called from its translation of the same passage, "Is there no rosin in Gilead ?" This reading occurs in the first edition of the Douai Bible, printed in 1609.

An extraordinary misprint occurred in the second edition of the Geneva Bible (1561). Matt. v. 9 was given, "Blessed are the *place-makers*, for they shall be called the children of God." Hence came the "Place-Makers' Bible"; but the error was early discovered and corrected.

Even more absurd was the mistake which crept into an edition of the Bible published by

J. Baskett at Oxford in 1717. The chapter-heading to Luke xx. appeared in this edition as "The Parable of the Vinegar," instead of "The Parable of the Vineyard." Baskett's Bible was beautifully produced—some of the copies were printed on vellum—but the proofs were carelessly read. The book became known as "a basketful of printers' errors." The volume is prized now only on account of its typographical faults.

The omission of the negative from the seventh commandment led to a Bible printed in London in 1631 being designated the "Wicked Bible." As soon as the blunder was discovered the edition was destroyed. Through the exertions of Archbishop Laud the printer is also said to have been heavily fined. Only four copies of the "Wicked Bible" are now in existence.

A little-known edition of the Bible, issued about 1700, rendered Psalm cxix. 161, "Printers [instead of 'princes'] have persecuted me without a cause." This, of course, resulted in the edition being styled the "Persecuting Printers' Bible." It fell into speedy oblivion, but is mentioned in the catalogue of the Caxton Exhibition of Bibles.

In 1810 the Oxford Press published a Bible which rendered Matt. xiii. 43, "Who hath ears to ear, let him hear." This curious concession

to Cockney usage naturally led to the early suppression of the whole issue.

In 1806 the king's printer in London published a Bible which became known as the "Standing Fishes Bible," from its rendering of Ezek. xlviij. 10, "It shall come to pass that the fishes shall stand upon it." The ability to stand should, of course, have been credited to the fishers, not to the fish!

In 1802 the king's printer had also issued a Bible with a strange blunder. 1 Tim. v. 21 is made to read, "I *discharge* thee before God." And in 1823 the same printer published a Bible in which Gen. xxiv. 61 was given as "Rebekah arose and her *camels*." The right word is *damsels*.

The Oxford University Press in 1810 issued an edition of Scripture which came to be called the "Wife-Hater Bible" from its rendering of Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to Me and hate not his father . . . yea, and his own *wife* also." The right word is "life."

In 1805, while a Bible was being produced at Cambridge, the proof-reader, being in doubt as to whether he should remove a comma, applied to his superior. The latter's decision, pencilled in the margin—"to remain"—was transferred to the text. The blunder was actually repeated in the Bible Society's edition of 1805-06. By it

Gal. iv. 29 was made to read, “Persecuted him that was born after the Spirit *to remain.*” This nonsensical verse gave to the issue the nickname, the “To Remain Bible.”

In an early issue of the Revised New Testament, there was a remarkable typographical mistake, which passed unnoticed for a time. In 1 Cor. iii. 5 the word *Lord* came in four words too soon. The latter part of the verse thus read, “Ministers through whom ye Lord believed; even as the gave to every man.” This edition was accordingly entitled the “Ye Lord Testament.”

In a Bible printed in Edinburgh in 1637, Jer. iv. 17 reads, “Because she hath been *religious* against Me, saith the Lord.” The word intended was of course “*rebellious.*”

XI

CATCHING COLOUR

THAT animals are profoundly influenced by their associations is a familiar scientific fact. Not infrequently their environment is assimilated and reproduced in their very colourings and markings. The polar bear, dwelling in a world of frost and snow, is appropriately white. On the fringe of the Arctic regions, there are creatures whose habitat is in summer free from snow, and they only turn white in winter. The mottlings of ptarmigan and grouse so reflect the appearance of the ground in which they make their home, that one can scarcely see them at close range. The trout is so like the bed of the stream that one may fail to see it at all. Trout have been transferred from a stream with a light-coloured bed to a stream with a dark bed, and the appearance of the fish has altered correspondingly. In Switzerland it is common to cage a canary with a nightingale, and thus to impart a peculiar richness to the notes of the former's song. A Dutch scientist took creeping insects from Holland to South

America. The change produced remarkable results. Beneath the damp and foggy skies of the Netherlands their tints were subdued, but in the tropics they became gay and brilliant. The insects actually doubled in size ; and though they had only crawled in Holland, they now in the new environment developed wings.

From such facts it is not difficult to gather a striking scientific parable of a momentous religious truth. The Seminole Indians have a curious tradition regarding the creation of mankind. The Great Spirit, they say, made three men of fair complexion, led them to a lake, and bade them leap in. One immediately obeyed, and emerged whiter than before. The second hesitated to plunge in until the water was slightly muddy, and he came out copper-coloured. The third waited until the water was black, and he became black himself. The nature of man's environment—the character of his associations—has much to do in making him what he becomes. The colours which emerge upon his spirit reveal, in the long run, the influences to which he has chosen to submit himself. All men are mirrors and they constantly reflect each other. "Whether we like it or not, we live in glass houses." Two men meet in a railway train, and scores of impressions begin at once to flit between them. Each discloses to

the other something of his life in the first few sentences he utters. Each reflects and assimilates characteristics of the other before ten minutes have gone. We are parts of all that we have met, and much that appeared merely fleeting has been transferred into the abiding substance of character. A distinguished artist recently said : "I believe you can make yourself anything you like, within limits. One of these limits is that you become like the people you live with, either in actual life or in the life of the mind. I have found that husbands grow like their wives, and wives like their husbands, very frequently." Most of us have seen that. We have watched a worthy couple who have gone hand in hand through life for half a century together, ever opening richer veins of sympathy in each others' hearts and fathoming new depths. Their very faces often grow similar. And it matters not to which of the two you speak, the same words appear suitable for either.

This law of association should read a warning especially to the younger folk, with regard to the selection of their *friends*. There are people who seem more fastidious about the dumb creatures they have about them than they are concerning their friends. The pets must be pure-bred ; but are the friends always pure-minded and pure-souled ? Intimates are chosen,

invited to their homes, introduced to their children as companions, without any inquiry into questions of character at all. Live with the lame, says the old adage, and you learn to limp. Live with wolves, and you learn to howl. Live with the blacksmith, and you come to smell of his forge. The canary when placed among sparrows loses its powers of song. An evil friend is a rope of sand, but a true and honourable friend is a chain of gold. "Show me who thy friends are," said an ancient sage, "and I will show thee what thou art." And a wiser still has told us, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." An environment of true friendship will always ennable and purify character.

"Be noble, and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

The principle finds its supreme illustration in Jesus Christ. "There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and the New Testament provides many examples of how the friendship of Jesus Christ made men spiritually beautiful. From the moment when He met the first disciples, the assimilating process began. His personal spell wrought gradual and very striking miracles of transformation upon them. They got to

speak and act in new ways. And the change became at length so noticeable that outside observers remarked on them the stamp of Christ, and "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." It was so also with St Paul. From the moment when he met the Christ upon the road to Damascus, his entire environment seemed altered. The fresh association drew forth the finest qualities and aspirations of his being. And finally he exclaimed, "To me to live is Christ." As the ground they live on stamps its colours on the ptarmigan and grouse—as the friend we live with stamps his character on us—the Christ with whom the Apostles dwelt stamped His personality on them. It was not imitation, it was absorption. This is one of the most fundamental truths in Christianity. In its final analysis it is the friendship of the human soul with Jesus Christ. Creeds and doctrines may follow that, but they dare not be permitted to interfere with it. Let one live in the Christ-environment of purity and love, practising the presence of the Master; and one inevitably comes to assimilate His Spirit and to acquire the impress of His life.

XII

A BIT OF THE SUN

RADIUM has been called "a bit of the sun imprisoned in the earth." It was discovered in the residue of a peculiar black ore named pitchblende, by a brilliant Polish scientist, Madame Curie, following upon some experiments of the French chemist, Becquerel, and some investigations conducted by her own husband. It is an element which apparently refuses to obey many prearranged laws, and though known for only about thirty years, it has already compelled a reconsideration of some accepted beliefs. Radium provides a suggestive natural parable of God's Holy Spirit.

A substance which shoots off particles of itself into space at such terrific speed that 100,000 miles a second is considered a low estimate, the actual loss, notwithstanding this, is almost nothing. The powers of illumination possessed by radium are thus very remarkable, and it is capable of imparting its own luminosity to other bodies which are normally quite inactive. "A small fraction of an ounce of

radium," it has been stated, "would provide a good light sufficient for several rooms, which, during the present century, would never need renewing." "The glow of radium in a dark room," says another, "might go on for ever." So from the dawn of time, the Holy Spirit has been giving light. He has imparted order to creation, guidance to the human mind, illumination to the immortal soul. He has taken of the things of Christ and shown them to us. Poets have found in nature, and mystics in man, that—

"Presence which disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts."

And still, like radium, the Holy Spirit remains as the "kindly light," and continues to lead men into ever fuller truth.

Radium also exerts amazing energy. A recent President of the British Association declared that it was many times more powerful than dynamite; and he went on to say that while 12,000 tons of coal are needed to drive a steamer for 6000 miles at 15 knots, the same effect would be produced by 22 ounces of radium. Radium of course is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Five thousand tons of pitchblende scarcely yield one pound of it. When first discovered, it cost seven times as much as diamonds, and it has risen in value greatly

since. But if it could be got, our coal supply need cause no further thought. And in the mineral and engineering spheres, many problems would be solved. The photographic action of radium is so powerful that it will penetrate black paper and other opaque objects as readily as sunlight passes through clear glass.

Since the dawn of time the Holy Spirit has been striving to save and uplift man, and, unlike radium, that Divine Spirit is available, without price, for all. His work will be done for man in the exact measure in which man opens to Him his heart, putting away all that hinders the lift of His mighty power. One said to his pastor ; "I want to live a Christian life ; but I have a craving that draws me back. I can't give it up. If I gave it up, I would die." His pastor said : "Die ! It is not necessary that you should even live ; but it *is* necessary that you should give up everything which hinders the inflow of God's Spirit to your soul." The man gave up his sin. But he did not die. That is how men rather *live*. And this man lived to be lifted high by the Spirit of the Eternal. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Radium possesses tragic powers of life and death. Applied to the nerve-centres of small

animals, it will paralyse and kill. It destroys microbes and bacteria. A pound of it, uncontrolled, would annihilate the earth. Professor Curie said that he would not venture into a room containing two or three ounces of it, lest his eyesight should be destroyed, his skin burnt, and fatal results ensue. The element has curative potentialities as well. Monsieur Becquerel tells that he had carried in his waistcoat pocket a small tube containing radium, in order to show it to his friends. After a short time he found the skin beneath his pocket red and inflamed. A painful sore ultimately developed. This at once suggested the use of radium to stamp out physical diseases. Cancers and ulcers have already yielded to its application; and if it could be obtained, many other beneficent possibilities would be opened up by it. The Holy Spirit is radium to stamp out moral evils and burn mischievous moral microbes and bacteria away. Held against the temple of a blind man, radium will so affect the retina that the sensation of light will be produced. Given entrance to man's soul, the Holy Spirit will expel moral blindness and restore the divine light of life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Radium has remarkable radio-activity. That

is to say that the element communicates itself to other bodies brought into proximity to it. A box of cardboard which has contained a small quantity of radium will continue radio-active for three weeks after the element has been removed. Place a diamond near a small quantity of radium and the stone will at once glow with a bluish light easily visible in complete darkness. A real diamond can be distinguished from a counterfeit one thus, with no expert knowledge whatever. Let the Holy Spirit take possession of a man's soul and he becomes at once radio-active. His influence passes to many other lives. An old author, referring to Milton's plea for liberty, casually says that, when he wrote, every fourth person was horribly disfigured by smallpox. Milton's plea for liberty was radio-active and catching. Charles I. was beheaded by it. It has banded nations in a ring of steel to crush tyranny, as in the Great War. But the smallpox is practically gone. There could scarcely be found one in a thousand "horribly disfigured by smallpox" to-day. Goodness is more catching and radio-active than evil. The Jews caught righteousness from Moses ; Africa received Christ from David Livingstone. And late in life, the great, good Earl of Shaftesbury declared that he owed everything to his old nurse, Maria Millis, though she died when he was still very young.

92 The Secret of a Warm Heart

“ From her,” he said, “ I got my faith, my hope,
my Christ.”

“ O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o’erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.”

XIII

LOOKING THROUGH LEATHER

THE Röntgen—or X—rays provide a striking scientific parable of more than one religious truth. These wonderful rays can penetrate with ease a volume of a thousand pages, which is opaque to common light, or a couple of packs of cards. Leather, wood, carbon, and slate are much more transparent to them than is ordinary glass. They can pass through one's hand, revealing its every joint and bone. They exist in total darkness; and it has been affirmed that the darkest room may be lit by collecting the X-rays in it and turning them into common light. In their possibilities of benefit to suffering humanity, they have not been surpassed by any discovery for at least a century. By their agency, bullets and other extraneous causes of injury may be located within the body, surgery may thus be facilitated, and life frequently be saved.

These marvellous rays ought to deepen our awe before the wonderful works of God. The first message sent over the transatlantic cable

to America is said to have been : “ What wonders hath God wrought ! ” Recent discoveries have greatly added to these wonders. Yet while they have been increasing, one can scarcely fail to be impressed—viewing men in the mass—by the modern absence of *wonder*, the modern death of awe. The phenomenon is traceable alike in literature and in life. Men

“ Chatter, nod, and hurry by,
And never once possess their souls
Before they die.”

Nobody should abjectly fear before God ; but “ let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him ! ” Awe lies at the core of religion ; and the marvels of the X-rays, disclosed by science, should strengthen it within us.

We know that the X-rays exist, but we do not know all that they really are. This is doubtless the reason of their name. They have indeed been photographed on sensitive plates, but nevertheless they contain an element which it is impossible to define exactly. We estimate and approve them in reality by their effects. One wishes that the same reasoning could always be applied to the facts and powers of the spiritual world. A celebrated astronomer, having swept the entire heavens with his telescope, reported that he could find no trace of God. Such a statement, as an argument against the existence

of spiritual powers, is "stale, flat, and unprofitable" to-day. Science itself teaches that it is no proof of a thing not existing that it cannot be seen or materially traced. A church might be filled with solid matter from floor to roof, yet the X-rays—invisible to sense—would remain within it. A doubter might weigh the overhead wire of the electric cars and find no difference before and after the current had been switched on. That the wire, having received the current, could draw tons of solid matter he might indignantly deny. Yet the drivers would quickly prove him wrong. The power is there, though invisible; and it is so also with the X-rays. Let the sceptic believe in the powers of the spiritual world because he witnesses, similarly, their effects. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." The Christian faith courts inspection. Every stone in the fabric may be tapped. There are plain evidences of God's omnipotence in the world which He has made, and which His daily providence sustains. There is the "fifth" Gospel of history. There are the manifest testimonies of Christ's saving grace, in His "living epistles," "known and read of all men."

It is as wrong to decide *beforehand* that the Divinity, the miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ are impossible, as to conclude *antecedently* that the marvels of the X-rays could not take

place. An article was once written to prove that no steamer could cross the Atlantic ; but not many months later the steamer *Sirius* actually carried that article across to America ! Let no question, whether of science or religion, be prejudged. Let the evidences be frankly and candidly examined. And as the wonders of the X-rays will be proved to be true, so the marvels of the faith of Christ will be practically demonstrated. It is to be devoutly wished that all who hesitate, like Nathaniel, about Jesus Christ, were as ready as Nathaniel was to " come and see." To reach the truth concerning Christ is not a matter of argument or criticism ; it is a matter of experience. The supreme merit of Christianity is that to see it in action is enough.

" If eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being."

An exceptional quality of the X-rays is that they cannot be either refracted or deflected, as can ordinary light or heat. Common light, for instance, cannot pass through powdered glass or ice, owing to the innumerable reflections and refractions which absorb the rays. But the X-rays cannot be deflected from their onward course. One can scarcely fail to read in this a parable of the all-penetrating eye of God. " All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of

Him with whom we have to do." As unerringly as the X-rays reveal the splintered needle deep in the sufferer's knee, the vision of God penetrates down to the deep places of our hearts. "What are your thoughts about God?" one asked a friend. "It matters little," was the answer, "what I think about God; but it matters everything what God thinks about me." Could we genuinely grasp this solemn truth of the all-penetrating eye of God, it would profoundly intensify our sense of the essential seriousness of life. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known." "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ." Well is it if, before this truth, we remember that He who will then be our Judge seeks now to be our Saviour.

XIV

WIRELESS

VARIOUS attempts have been made to seek out points of contact between the kingdoms of nature and of the spirit. Of these the most successful and widely known are probably Bishop Butler's "Analogy of Religion," and Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." Had Drummond been writing his book to-day one cannot help thinking that he would have included a few chapters upon recent scientific phenomena. The discovery of Wireless Telegraphy, at all events, provides a very suggestive parable of a great and permanent religious truth. In the spiritual realm we are all wireless operators. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Each of us stands with his foot upon a point where a thousand currents meet ; and each receives his wireless message and sends forth his wireless influence every moment that he lives. "Ships that pass in the night," we have been called ; but we go not by without speaking to each other. And what we exchange is not words but souls.

Writers like James and Sidgwick assure us that thoughts may be transmitted from mind to mind, though many miles may separate the persons who thus communicate. "Telepathy," says Sidgwick, "is scientifically as well authenticated as gravitation." In America it is common to speak of brain-waves—mental waves which one can send forth to influence other minds. Well, in any case, there seem to be soul-waves—spiritual waves which each sends forth to influence other characters and lives. We may think to suspend this telegraphy and thwart this solemn and inevitable law. We may seclude ourselves "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." But of the possession of some influence over others we cannot divest ourselves. Each soul is part of some larger organic whole, and we are all "bound in the bundle of life" together. Is there love in you? It must illumine somebody. Is there hate in you? It must injure somebody. The power to touch other lives wakes when we wake, speaks when we speak, acts when we act. To be a wireless operator seems as much the birth-right of each as is his breath.

"Never a word is said
But it trembles in the air,
And the truant voice has sped
To vibrate everywhere;

And far, far off in the viewless years
Its echoes shall ring in human ears.

There is no end to the sky,
And the stars are everywhere,
And time is eternity,
And the near is over there ;
And the common deeds of the common day
Are ringing bells in the far away."

During the Great War one of His Majesty's ships while out in the North Sea picked up, on a certain morning, a German wireless message announcing its own destruction. Slightly injured in a skirmish, it learned the surprising intelligence that it had been sunk. Wireless messages may frequently find strange and unexpected lodgment. And the influence of human words and actions may also penetrate into very unlooked for quarters. Marconi bridged the Atlantic ; but any one of us may bridge the world. Science has said that the pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice, ultimately travel round the earth. Thus when Emerson wrote :

"Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world,"

there was strictly more than mere poetic licence in his words. It ought to redouble our watchfulness to know that such potentialities attach to our ordinary life.

“Walk with care 'mid human spirits ;
Live for blessing, not for ban ;
'Twere better to have never lived
Than lived to curse a deathless man.”

Wireless telegraphy, of course, demands a common rhythm between the sender and the receiver of a message. A score of ships may plough the sea ; but a wireless message may reach only one, because it alone may have the apparatus keyed into exact accord with the corresponding apparatus whence the message came. It is through the community of rhythm that the message gets itself recorded and understood. Much lofty influence from others—much, even, of Divine Grace and Love—may fail to reach us, because we have nothing in our own hearts by which to receive them. In Samuel Johnson's hearing ■ lady said : “I see nothing remarkable in that picture.” “Maybe not, madam,” retorted Johnson, “but what would you not give to be able to see it ?” The defect lay not in the picture but in the lady's appreciative power. “The day will come,” says ■ modern writer, “when copper wires, gutta-percha coverings, and iron sheathings will be relegated to the museum of antiquities. Then when one wants to telegraph to a friend, he knows not where, he will call in an electro-magnetic voice, which will be heard loud by him who has

the electro-magnetic ear, but will be silent to every one else. He will call: 'Where are you?' And the reply will come: 'I am in the coal-mine.' 'I am crossing the Andes.' 'I am in the Pacific.' Or perhaps no reply will come, and he may then conclude that the friend is dead." So to catch and assimilate the truest spiritual influences we must acquire the ready and receptive heart. "Art thou a beggar at God's door?" asks the old Puritan. "Be sure thou gettest a great bowl, for as thy bowl is, so will be thy mess." "According to your faith, be it unto you," said our Lord to the two blind men. And He asked the disciples in the storm: "Where is your faith?"

In a church at Pisa, Galileo noticed a lamp swinging from the roof. Thousands of people must have seen it before; but Galileo brought to it a mind prepared, and from it he deduced the principle of the pendulum. Many messages from God only reach the spirit which has been prepared and attuned to receive them.

"In ourselves the sunshine dwells :
In ourselves the music swells.
Everywhere the heart awake
Finds what music it can make.
Everywhere the light and shade
By the gazer's eye is made."

XV

MOUNT SINAI AND THE GOSPELS

TRUTH is stranger than fiction, and the historic mountain which is associated with the promulgation of the Mosaic Law has also given to the world more than one manuscript of the Christian Gospels. The Convent of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, erected by Justinian about fourteen hundred years ago, might well have been suspected of concealing valuable treasures within its recesses, but it eluded exploration until comparatively recent times. It was on 12th March 1844 that Tischendorf sailed from Livorno to Alexandria, and thence reached Sinai on his first visit of investigation. Arriving at the convent on 24th May, he signalled the initial days of his search by discovering forty-three leaves which formed part of the famous Codex Sinaiticus. He was not permitted to carry away with him any of the priceless leaves, but they naturally led him to plan further journeys to the convent. His second visit, in 1853, failed in its principal intention. He did not recover the remaining leaves of the celebrated Codex,

but he came upon several valuable manuscripts which are now to be seen in Leipsic, Oxford, and London.

At length, in 1858, Tischendorf obtained from the Russian Government financial and moral backing for a new journey, the Czar lending his patronage. Mount Sinai was reached on 31st January 1859. The search for the missing leaves was at first fruitless. On the afternoon of 4th February, however, after having decided to give up, Tischendorf was casually informed by the steward of the monastery that an important manuscript was laid away in his room. Accompanying the steward thither, he had shown to him what the monk called a copy of the Septuagint. The manuscript was wrapped in cloth which, on being unrolled, disclosed the very document Tischendorf had given up hope of finding. Here were not merely the leaves left behind in 1844, but also a large number of other leaves containing the New Testament, Barnabas, and part of Hermas. The Greek New Testament was now complete down to the last paragraph. Almost beside himself with joy, Tischendorf spent much of the night in copying the then unique Barnabas, finishing it and the fragment of Hermas before leaving the monastery on 7th February. He met the prior of St Catherine's at Cairo on the 14th, and

obtained permission to have the text of the New Testament fetched there to be copied. The original manuscript was later taken to Europe to be edited, and was placed in the imperial library of the Russian capital. Belonging to the fourth century, it provides us with our oldest Greek manuscript of the New Testament; and it shares with the Codex Vaticanus the honour of being the purest.

Tischendorf's great find, and the fact that in 1889 Professor Rendel Harris of Cambridge had also discovered in the monastery of St Catherine the lost Apology of Aristides, filled the hearts of two cultured Cambridge ladies, Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson, with a keen desire to visit Mount Sinai in the hope of lighting upon some hidden treasure. The ladies, who could speak modern Greek fluently and were acquainted with Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew, reached Cairo in January 1892. They won the goodwill of the Greek Archbishop, who gave them his blessing and the coveted permission to examine the library of the Convent of St Catherine.

In the very heart of the mountains, just where Moses had received the Law, in Nature's profoundest solitude and amid scenery unsurpassed for wild and stern grandeur, stands the venerable convent. Particularly by moonlight, the place impressed the adventurous visitors with

its majesty. The sheer towering cliffs, the tall waving cypresses, the carpet of fallen almond blossoms with a glimmer as of snow, filled them with awe. The introduction to Galakteon, the librarian of the monastery, from Professor Harris, together with the Archbishop's permit and their own use of the native tongue, soon opened the recesses of the ancient building to the enterprising investigators. The oldest manuscripts were stored in dark closets, and the damp leaves stuck together. They had to be worked with one's fingers or steamed over a kettle before they could be separated. The windows of the library had no glass, and the bitterly cold wind which constantly swept upon the searchers caused them great discomfort. One day they and Father Galakteon were going through the old unbound parchment, which had not been looked into for centuries, when they came upon a Syriac palimpsest of 358 pages. Its leaves were so glued together by time that the least force made them crumble. As its name indicates, a palimpsest is an ancient manuscript which, having been partially erased (scraped with a knife or abraded with pumice-stone) has been written over a second time, as if it were a blank sheet. In days when parchment was scarce the monks frequently wrote upon older manuscripts fresh matter in this way; and the

later writing was often far less valuable than the earlier. The second writing on the palimpsest now discovered was seen to belong to the seventh century, and consisted of lives of female saints who had lived before that time. The material was unimportant; but the underwriting was necessarily older, and much might come of it. "I knew the underwriting to be part of the Gospel," said Mrs Lewis, "from the frequent use of the words, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you.' As to the date, on the very last page of the MS. I saw the date of the second writing clearly marked, 'A thousand and nine years after Alexander.' Now he had lived about 312 B.C., so that I had no difficulty in arriving at my conclusion that the manuscript was written over in the seventh century after our Lord's death. Some of the underwriting was very faint, but I tried a certain experiment which was completely successful. I had made inquiries in the British Museum MS. room as to the best means of reviving ancient writing when faded, so as neither to injure the script nor the vellum; and so I had come provided with four bottles of a very ill-scented composition." With what Galakteon, the librarian, called her scent-bottle, Mrs Lewis was after some delay allowed to experiment on the palimpsest. Writing which had been unde-

cipherable became clear and vivid. Many a blank margin became covered with script. And undoubted evidence appeared that an early Syriac text of the Gospels had been discovered. The ladies photographed the whole MS., and left for home on 8th March. The following February found them back at Sinai. On this visit the entire palimpsest was copied. The text and a translation were published in 1894.

This version of the Gospels corresponds precisely to our New Testament version in narrative, miracle, and doctrine. It belongs to the early fifth—possibly the fourth—century ; and being written in the language spoken in Palestine when Jesus lived, it abounds in free description and emendation. Thus St Luke iv. 20 reads, “And He *rolled up* the books.” St Matthew xi. 30 is rendered, “My yoke is *gentle* and My burden is *small*.” A striking translation is that in St Luke vi. 35, “Love your enemies—and *do not cease hope of men*.” St Matthew xii. 36 is given thus, “I say unto you that every *good* word which men shall *not* speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” This is a more comprehensive rendering than that in our Gospels ; for most of our sins are sins of omission—unwritten letters and unpaid visits, as somebody suggests. In St John iv. 27 we read, “His disciples came and wondered that

with the woman He was *standing* and talking." Why was Jesus standing? Shortly before, He was sitting wearied on the well of Sychar. Besides, when an Eastern rabbi was teaching, he always sat. Possibly the Master's enthusiasm for the tremendous truths He was voicing made Him rise; but Mrs Lewis suggests that here was an occasion upon which He broke through the restrictions of time and race, and rendered to womanhood the courtesy accorded to her by all Christian civilisations to-day.

XVI

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

TRADITIONS of a primeval garden, in which lay the cradle of the human race, where innocence and happiness reigned, and where there was habitual intercourse with divine beings, are found in many lands. The Greeks of classical days had their Hesperides, with trees bearing golden apples. The ancient Chinese spoke of a primitive garden which held the Fountain of Immortality, split into four rivers and watering the Tree of Life. The Persians looked back to a primeval Paradise girded by a river, but destroyed by a serpent who made winter. The sacred books of Babylonia and Chaldea record the story of an ancient garden, resembling the account in Genesis in many details. Between the Biblical narrative and those of other lands, however, the differences are even more marked than the similarities ; and the former is unique in its simplicity, dignity, lofty conception of God and man, and emphatic representation of sin as a voluntary violation of God's command which entailed the gravest consequences.

The geographical position of the Garden of Eden will probably never be exactly known. Speculation regarding it has simply run riot. Butler's "Hudibras" pours fitting scorn upon the numerous views which have been advanced :—

"He knew the seat of Paradise :
Could tell in what degree it lies ;
And as he was disposed could prove it
Below the moon or else above it."

We may not frequently be able to accept Martin Luther as a Biblical critic for to-day ; but he was perhaps nearer the truth than he himself knew when he wrote : "Paradise, shut at first by the sin of man, has since been so utterly wasted . . . that no trace of it remains." For many think that the Garden of Eden lay once upon a projection of land connecting the continents of Asia and Africa, of which all except a single isthmus is now beneath the waves. At all events, it seems as though God wished nobody to trifle over a geographical identification when the real value of Eden's garden was to hold up momentous moral and spiritual truths.

(1) Apart from all imaginative details, the Garden of Eden witnesses the copestone set upon the creative process in the arrival of Man, who appears in the divine image and likeness. There is a story of a student who was lost in

admiration of a portrait which his master had just completed. "Sir!" he gasped, "it lacks only one thing to make it divine." "What is that?" inquired the master. "Speech!" came the reply. In the Garden of Eden Nature had reached perfection. The flying dragons and monsters of the slime had given place to sheep and oxen browsing in the meadow, and bees and butterflies flitting amid the flowers. Then came Man. A perfect Nature was crowned by human Nature. Blossoms and humanity appeared together. In the fulness of the time the creative process achieves its climax; and man stands erect, casts off lower encumbrances, lifts his eyes to the stars, and voices the reason and thought of God. "God formed man of the dust of the ground." That is man on his lower side: dust. "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." That is man on his higher side: deity. Dust! Deity! Evolution demands a prior involution—no man can lift himself by the collar of his own coat—and the Spirit of God must have guided and inspired the long development from the initial protoplasm up to the climax in the Garden. Yet in a special way God's Spirit is imparted to *man*. God *begets* man, so that there is a common essence of being in them. And thus man is the king of the Garden. The greatest star is at

the lower end of the telescope. "What a piece of work is a man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a God ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! "

(2) The Garden of Eden further witnesses man's Fall. Nature reveals not only progress but retrogression ; and man also has lost physical and artistic capacities which his ancestors undoubtedly possessed. Now, in the Garden of Eden, man was endowed with moral innocence and happy ignorance of evil. He had nothing to hide, nothing to make him blush. But instead of developing this spiritual condition into virtue and nobility of character, he yielded to the voice of the tempter, and his evolution was arrested. Virtue cannot be *given* : it must be *won*. It is easy to say that, had He chosen, God could have created man in such a manner that he could not have sinned. But so created, would man have been in any way superior to the brute life over which he was summoned to rule ? Man was "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." He had the freedom of will which knits him closely to God. And he chose wrongly, and fell.

(3) In the Garden of Eden a *third* fact dimly yet strikingly emerges. The Voice of God calls

to Adam, “Where art thou ?” As St Ambrose tersely puts it, God asks not the place but the condition in which His children were. And so shame is born, and the divine retribution is pronounced. Yet the sentence almost breaks down in pity, and the shadow of the Cross hovers amid the trees. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” says the divine voice to the serpent, “and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” The brood of the serpent bruises many. But thanks be to God that the seed of a woman—cradled in Bethlehem—bruised the head of the serpent and broke his power for ever. And we also read: “God made unto Adam and his wife coats of skins and clothed them.” The word for “clothed” in Hebrew is from the same root as the word meaning Atonement. There is surely here again a fore splendour of Calvary. And so even in the Garden of Eden “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”

“The Garden, O the Garden, must it go ?
Source of our Hope and our most dear Regret ?
The ancient story, must it no more show
How man may win it yet ?”

Nay, we may go back and meditate amid its manifold beauties with genuine spiritual joy.

XVII

THE GARDEN OF NABOTH

NABOTH was a sturdy Israelite peasant; and his fateful garden lay close to King Ahab's palace, which formed part of the eastern wall of the beautiful city of Jezreel. Whether because he thought it would provide a better "garden of herbs"—or kitchen garden—than the one he had, which may have been too near the palace for its amenity, or because he fancied it would form a desirable addition to his domain, the Israelite monarch cast covetous eyes upon it. He proposed to Nabothe what seem at first reasonable terms for its transference to himself. Nabothe could either have another and better garden elsewhere or, alternatively, he could have his garden's worth in money. This, however, was clearly a case in which the value of a thing cannot be computed on any commercial basis. A common handkerchief, a child's trinket, a lock of hair, may carry associations which render these trifling objects so precious that we would not part with them for a king's ransom. It was so with Nabothe's garden. "The Lord

forbid," he says, "*that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee!*" This patch of ground was an heirloom from ancestors whose name Naboth was proud to bear. Accordingly, to Ahab's demand for it, Naboth returns a courteous yet decided answer, No!

Sorely hurt at the rebuff, Ahab flings down upon his royal couch, turns his face to the wall, refuses even to eat. He was the first hunger-striker. We smile at the spectacle of this powerful monarch, rich in possessions and swathed in pleasure, yet sulking because he could not get his own way about a garden plot. But a new actor now enters upon the drama —Jezebel, Ahab's wife. Jezebel irresistibly reminds us of Shakespeare's character, Lady Macbeth. Each is to her husband the figure that stands back in the shadow yet dominates in evil ways his entire career. Each finds her husband hesitating on the brink of a great crime; and each devises the fiendish plot into which he must plunge, and pushes in his halting footsteps. Macbeth covets King Duncan's crown, but he shrinks from wading through the blood which he sees will have to be spilt in order to gain it. He soliloquises :

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly."

Yet he vacillates, even when his victim is housed

beneath his very roof. Then Lady Macbeth intervenes. She pours all the vials of her scorn upon her husband's head. "Screw your courage to the sticking-place," she jeers, "and we'll not fail." And, the stronger mind dominating the weaker, the deed of blood is done. Then to his prickings of remorse she mockingly retorts :

"Infirm of purpose !
. . . 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil."

Strikingly parallel to this is Jezebel's relation to Ahab. Coveting Naboth's garden, as Macbeth coveted Duncan's crown, Ahab would not play false, and yet would wrongly win. Then Jezebel comes to him and withers him with her scorn. "*Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?*" she hisses in his ear. "*Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise . . . and let thine heart be merry : I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.*" Then she unfolds her plan. And between them—Jezebel writing orders to have Naboth stoned for blaspheming God and the king (which was a false charge), and Ahab letting her seal them with his royal seal—Naboth is got away. Then with hellish laugh of triumph Jezebel bids Ahab "*Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth . . . which he refused to give thee . . . for Naboth is not alive but dead.*"

Naboth was dead, but God was alive ; and as Ahab drove up to take over the ill-got garden, God's prophet, Elijah, meets him on its threshold. Stepping from the tall vines, he arrests the regal hand just as it was laid upon the latch. It is a dramatic moment. There would be first a silence one could almost feel. Then Ahab spoke. "*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*" With all the horror of a stricken conscience in his face the king lets fall his hand. And Elijah replies : "Yes, for thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." "*Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.*" It all came true : Ahab was finally slain upon a bloody field.

The story of Naboth's garden provides a striking example of the wickedness of weakness and the weakness of wickedness. Ahab was not an Old Testament Nero, a monster of evil. He was patriotic, artistic, and refined. But pitifully he lacked in moral strength. The clue to his character is found in the counter-influences upon him of Jezebel on the one side and Elijah on the other. Now Jezebel incites him to crime ; now, like an incarnate conscience, Elijah bows him in sackcloth for it. Anon, Jezebel gets him back to his crime again. The two

forces play for the stake of Ahab's soul. And Jezebel ultimately wins.

“Whatever you are, *be* that !
Whatever you do, *be* true !
Straightforwardly act, *be* honest, in fact
Be nobody else but *you* !”

The scene at the gate of Naboth's garden also discloses the terrible confusion and perversion which sin causes in our judgments of others. In God's name Elijah confronts Ahab on the threshold of the vineyard ; and the king says : “*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?*” In point of fact, Elijah was not Ahab's enemy at all. He was the best friend that wretched monarch had in all Israel. In the Yule-tide festivals of Mediævalism they used to appoint an Abbot of Unreason ; and the village fool would be dressed as a bishop. It was done in frolic. But sin creates worse metamorphoses, not in fancy, but in fact, making Ahab say of his kindest adviser : “*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?*” Is this not one of the most revolting of all the results of sin ?

XVIII

THE GARDEN OF SOLOMON'S SONG

THE Song of Solomon contains some of the finest Nature-poetry in Scripture. The vineyards on the hillsides with their sun-brownèd keepers, the shepherds and their flocks sheltering from the noontide heat, the fawns feeding among the lilies, the apples and citrons with their luscious fragrance, the clusters of grapes, the fig-tree with its green figs, the cooing of the turtle-dove—all are touched in a series of brilliant pictures. Yet the presence of Solomon's Song in the Bible has awakened surprise. It never mentions God once. It never refers to temple, altar, priest. It runs wholly along the human plane, a dark saying—as one suggests—which merely delighted the wayward genius of Solomon. Read, however, as an allegory setting forth the tender and affectionate relationship of Christ towards His Church, the Song of Solomon becomes profoundly significant and suggestive.

Under such an interpretation, Christ pictures His Church as a ravishingly beautiful garden. According to the etymologist, the word “garden”

is the past participle of the verb "to gird," and means an enclosure reclaimed from the surrounding uncultivated waste and protected by a fence against the intrusion of those who would enter to steal or destroy. So the Church of Christ is in the world, yet not of it. She is a "garth" or garden, defended by the power of God, and the especial care of Jesus Christ. "*God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved.*" Then a garden is a place of variety. Unlike the gardens to be seen in Holland, whose outstanding feature is their monotony, the celebrated gardens of Solomon sought to gather in everything which was grateful to the eye and pleasant to the taste. Isaiah refers to the setting of a garden "*with strange slips,*" evidently pointing to the Jewish liking for the cultivation of exotics. The Book of Ecclesiastes ascribes to Solomon the words: "*I made me gardens and orchards and I planted in them trees of all kind of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.*" And the Jewish Targum on this passage runs: "I made me well-watered gardens and parades, and sowed there all kinds of plants, some for use of eating, and some for use of drinking, and some for purposes of medicine; all kinds of plants of spices. I planted in them trees of emptiness [*i.e.* bearing no fruit] and all trees of spices

which the demons brought me from India, and every tree which produces fruit." Here again the figure of the garden is suggestive of much when applied to the Church. The Church is infinitely diversified. The white, the black, the red, the yellow man ; the prince and the pauper ; the mystic and the mechanic ; lofty Moses and rugged Elijah ; fiery St Paul, and St John, the apostle of love—they are all gathered, like the varied colours of the prism, into the one universal Church.

The ideal seems to fall far short of realisation ; and the Song of Songs depicts the Christ as praying : "*Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon My garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.*" The garden requires the cold and snow of winter, the balmy breath of spring, the geniality of summer, the maturity and richness of autumn to play their various parts upon the waiting soil. Professor Huxley said that in all our gardens lie the seeds of tropical plants and flowers. They have been borne by the winds and birds. But they do not grow because they lack a tropical atmosphere. Could six months of tropical weather visit our shores, said Huxley, we would be astonished at the wonderful flowers and fruits which our gardens would produce. If the winds could blow, the spices would flow. It is a pure

question of atmosphere and weather. And in tropical forests, which are too dense for the winds to penetrate, the vegetation lacks stamina and becomes rank and weak. It is once more a suggestive allegory for the Church. In a continental flower-show the gems were the children of Alpine mist and storm. And while ease and comfort may produce many graces of character, the northern blasts of adversity bring out, not seldom, the richest qualities of the spiritual life. As some fruits never become perfect till they are touched by the finger of the frost, some men and women never reveal their finest characteristics till grief and trial come upon them.

“O life so full of storm and stress !
O bitter wind, Euroclydon,
That strews the shore with shipwrecked hopes,
What shall our sad hearts rest upon ?
Come, blessed angel of the Lord :
Stand thou beside us calm and strong.
Hide thou our lives with Christ in God ;
And change our sorrows to a song !”

To the Christ walking in His garden, what spices, then, are flowing out ? Is there Unity ? “*That they all may be one*” was His most impassioned prayer before the Cross. Yet marred, scarred, is this flower, for which the Saviour so earnestly interceded. In extreme old age the

Apostle John was carried daily to the church at Ephesus. He was too frail to preach ; but he constantly repeated the command : " Little children, love one another." The disciples, growing weary of the reiteration, asked him : " Master, why sayest thou only this ? " " Because," he replied, " it is the Lord's own precept ; and if done, it is enough." Our Lord would bid His Churches to bury the hatchet ; and He would say the very same to them to-day.

To the Christ walking in His garden, does the fragrance of the flower of Zeal flow forth ? Is the Church "*fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners*" ? And is there Gratitude ? And is there Personal Love ? Such passion-flowers as these should surely fling their rich sweetness out to Christ from the beautiful and dearly-beloved garden of His Church.

XIX

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

MANY of the scenes hallowed by great events in our Lord's earthly life are, to-day, doubtful or disputed. About the approximate position of the Garden of Gethsemane, however, there appears to be pretty general agreement. Beneath a moon only forty-eight hours short of its Paschal fulness Jesus and His disciples, on the tragic night of the Betrayal, left the streets of Jerusalem by the gate on the north of the Temple, descended the Valley of Jehoshaphat, crossed the brook Kidron, which flowed through it, and climbed for a short distance the Mount of Olives on the farther side. They then turned aside, a little to the right, and entered the fateful garden. Its name meant "Olive-Press," and indicated the purpose for which, either then or at some earlier time, it was employed. A grassy enclosure, carefully fenced in, some seventy paces square, it would contain a grove of olive trees and the rude press for the extraction of the oil, together with a variety of fragrant flowers and fruit-bearing trees and

many blooming shrubs. Probably it was the property of some prosperous merchant of Jerusalem; and with his privileged acquaintances he would be accustomed to resort to it in order to enjoy a summer retreat from his pressing duties and some shelter from the heat of the sun and the bustle of the streets. Its close proximity to the city—it would be less than half a mile away—gave it a special value in this connection. It has been thought that it may have belonged to the father of Mark the Evangelist; but, at all events, its owner would likely be a timorous admirer of our Lord, who permitted Him to make use of it now and then. “*Jesus,*” we read, “*ofttimes resorted thither with His disciples.*” And amidst His journeyings and anxieties the grey leaves, the dark-brown trunks, the soft greensward, chequered by the moonlight’s fitful gleam—with the shaggy Mount of Olives towering above—must frequently have whispered to the Master’s spirit of the rest and peace of God.

“Oft the cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervour of His prayer.”

From the fourth century the Garden of Gethsemane has been much visited by Christian pilgrims. Eight venerable olive trees, whose gnarled trunks bear silent witness to their antiquity, may still be seen in it. These, how-

ever, cannot be the very trees which were in the Garden at the Passion of Christ. For at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus every tree around the city was cut down. The olives of Gethsemane may have reproduced themselves ; but it seems more likely that the trees now there were planted by later hands within the sacred enclosure. The Garden also contains a building known as "The Chapel of the Sweat," to which many pilgrims go. No visitor with any sentiment or imagination can help being stirred to his profoundest depths by this holy spot ; and a traveller who stood within it one night in the moonlight declares that there were awakened in him the most poignant emotions and the most overwhelming sense of sin which he ever expected to experience in this world.

"Hearken ! the voice of the Lord
Among the trees, the weary olive trees
Which have been wrestlers with the bitter storms
Of many years. Now do they bend their heads
Above another Wrestler, whom the storms
Of God are bursting on."

Gethsemane is for ever memorable because it witnessed the Passion of our Lord. Twelve hours were to elapse between His final visit to it and the time when He should be crucified on Calvary ; but St Luke, " the beloved physician " —who ought to know—assigns the real Agony

to the Garden. Inasmuch as the suffering of a sensitive, tender, and exalted mind is far deeper than that possible for the body, this may well have been. The cup that is most capacious can be filled the fullest. The tree which towers the highest is swept by the wildest fury of the storm. The narrow mind has few troubles ; but the further one rises in the scale of being, the keener becomes one's perception of both pleasure and pain. In the Garden of Gethsemane the sin of the world pressed upon the exquisitely sensitive spirit of Jesus with overwhelming force. A little distance from the specially privileged three, and in the darkest shadow of the olive branches—His form only dimly visible—the Saviour fell upon His knees. The anguish of His exalted spirit forced drops of blood from the vessels beneath the surface of the skin—a phenomenon sufficiently attested by medical science—and as the conflict developed in intensity, the Man of Sorrows was prostrated upon the ground. A young prisoner was being tried in court. “Have you,” asked the judge, “anything to plead ?” Then a white-haired man rose, came forward, put his arm round the youth, and declared : “Your honour, *we* have nothing to say. *We* only ask for mercy.” The old man was the prisoner’s father. He was not guilty ; yet he felt the lad’s crime to the quick,

because the lad was his. Indeed, he became so identified with it that it broke his heart. In Gethsemane, Jesus, though innocent Himself, felt man's sin as though it were His own ; and it so weighed upon Him—there in the Garden of the Press—that it broke His heart. Some one has said that the cause of Jesus' death upon the Cross was “anguish of mind, resulting in rupture of the heart.” But the death upon the Cross was only the outcome of the spiritual struggle that bowed Jesus in Gethsemane's Garden amid the grey leaves and springing flowers. Perhaps it was in the Garden that the most vital part of the great Atonement wrought for man by the Saviour took place.

“ My God, my God, and can it be
That I should sin so lightly now ;
And think no more of evil thought
Than of the winds that wave the bough ?

• • • •
Ever, when tempted, make me see,
Beneath the olive's moon-pierced shade,
My God outstretched, and bruised, and wan,
And bleeding on the earth He made.”

XX

THE GARDEN OF THE SEPULCHRE

THE exact position of the Garden of the Sepulchre has long been a subject of controversy ; but we know that it lay adjacent to Golgotha, the place where our Lord was crucified. Contemplating the hour of his death, Matthew Arnold once voiced the wish that some one would then wheel him to an open window, that he might see yet once

“The wide aerial landscape spread :
The world that was ere I was born,
The world that lasts when I am dead.”

It was singularly fitting that, on the slope of “*the place of a skull*,” there should be the open window of this garden, and that the body of Jesus, as it was carried down the “green hill far away,” should be met by buds and flowers —the prophets of immortality.

The traditional site of the Garden of the Sepulchre has long been marked by a church ; and this sacred building was the dearest object of the quest of the great Crusades. The sanctuary has been thus described. On entering, “immediately before you is the Stone of

unction, said to mark the spot on which our Lord's body was laid in preparation for burial after being anointed. It is a large slab of limestone. . . . A few steps to the left is the place where the women stood during the anointing; and from this you pass into the great round western end of the church, the model of all the circular churches of Europe. In the centre, which is sixty-seven feet across, is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. . . . Here, cased in marble, stands what is called a piece of the stone rolled away by the angel; and at the western end, entered by a low doorway, is the reputed Tomb-Chamber of our Lord. This is a very small spot, six feet wide, a few inches longer, and very low. The Tomb itself is a raised table two feet high, three feet wide, and over six feet long, the top of it serving as an altar, over which the darkness is only relieved by the dim lamps."

The Garden of the Sepulchre was one of the numerous gardens surrounding Jerusalem of which Josephus speaks; and it was the property of Joseph of Arimathea. In striking fashion the prophetic words of Isaiah were fulfilled: "*He made His grave . . . with the rich in His death.*" For Joseph was one of the wealthy Sanhedrists of the Jewish capital. Like many of the city magnates, he maintained ■

suburban garden for retirement and rest ; and in it he had constructed a costly grave in which he intended his body to be laid at death. Burial in a garden was not uncommon among the ancient Hebrews. Both King Manasseh and his son Amon were interred in the garden of the royal palace, the garden of Uzza. And such interment in his richly cultivated garden was the eventual design of Joseph of Arimathea. This Sanhedrist had been greatly attracted by Jesus Christ ; but his discipleship was in secret for fear of the Jews. To the decision, however, which condemned our Lord to crucifixion he did not consent. He preserved silence throughout the events of the trial and until the death of Christ. But then a sacred courage moved his soul, and he "*went in boldly unto Pilate*" and begged the body of his Lord. When the captains falter, Joseph and Nicodemus—two of the rank and file—step to the front and bear the flag of Christ aloft. And the request is granted, and the Lord's body is reverently taken down from the Cross and carried to Joseph's garden-tomb. Crucified like a criminal, Jesus was buried like a king. And there was exceeding fitness in the fact that the garden-grave of Joseph was new. For in it was affectionately laid One who should never see corruption, and who would make all things new.

The Garden of the Sepulchre is also the Garden of the Resurrection. Little did Joseph of Arimathea dream that, long ere his own "fitful fever" of life should be over, his garden-grave would be hallowed for ever by the fluttering of angels' wings, the rolling of the great stone from the mouth of the tomb, and the rising of the Son of God. Yet it was so. Very early on the first Easter morning, "*when it was yet dark*"—an eloquent proof of her devotion—Mary Magdalene made her way to the tomb, carrying spices for the further anointing of her Lord. The Roman guards had fled from the trampled garden, and the slab which had closed the mouth of the grave was gone. St Peter and St John responded to Mary's summons and ran to the scene; but it was to Mary that the risen Christ first revealed Himself. And the first words which His sacred lips addressed to her in the garden, while the grey dawn softened into a warmer glow, were: "*Woman, why weepest thou?*"

A venerable and interesting tradition is associated with Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the Garden of the Sepulchre. The tradition was once widely current in England, though historical facts are lacking to attest it. Joseph, it was maintained, was sent by St Philip to our own Britain about the year 63, and he was the very

first to preach the Gospel of Christ upon our shores. He settled at Glastonbury in Somersetshire, and erected in wattle-work the first Christian church that England ever saw. At Glastonbury he planted his staff in the ground, and it sprouted into the Holy Thorn, the descendants of which are to this day flourishing on Weary-All-Hill, an eminence near by on which Joseph had sat. These thorn-trees have the curious property of blossoming almost exactly on Christmas Eve. As Christmas draws on, "you can hear the buds haffer," the country people say. The tradition is one which stirs and fires our lukewarm blood. In an ancient list of relics there are several mementoes of the owner of the Garden of the Sepulchre, and the title is there assigned to him of St Joseph of England. May the successors of him who possessed the Garden of the Sepulchre bring England to ever fuller knowledge of Christ and "*the power of His Resurrection!*!"

XXI

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

THE word Paradise occurs three times in the Old Testament and three times in the New. It is of Persian origin, and originally meant a wooded park or garden. In the writings of Xenophon the word is frequently found, and indicates a wide and open enclosure, with its natural beauty unspoiled, studded with noble and stately trees, many bearing fruit, watered by clear streams, upon whose banks wandered large herds of antelopes and sheep. When the language of Israel, in the freer commercial intercourse with other lands, took a wider range, as it did in the brilliant era of Solomon, the word Paradise passed into Hebrew use. It was first applied to the ancient Garden of Eden, amid the groves of which God had once talked with man. In the course of time it became the symbol of the great future heaven which awaited the soul of man hereafter. Feeling, no doubt, that the conception of heaven which it conveyed was somewhat sensuous and material, writers often attempted to allegorise it. Thus

Origen interpreted "Paradise" as meaning virtue, the "trees" as representing the angels, and the "rivers" as denoting the outgoings of wisdom and kindred graces. Ambrose counted the majority of Christian writers of the Apostolic Age as being advocates of this method of interpretation. But it did not appeal very strongly to the people as a whole. The single occasion on which our Lord applied the word Paradise proves that. Though He mentioned it only once, probably because of its materialistic and sensuous implications, still He used it in His comforting assurance to the penitent robber on the Cross, because it was the most intelligible form in which He could put the salvation He now desired to promise to him. The other two occasions upon which the word Paradise is mentioned in the New Testament are both times when it is symbolically employed. St Paul speaks of being "*caught up into paradise*," and in the Book of Revelation St John refers to "*the paradise of God*." By the Garden of Paradise two prominent aspects of heaven would be suggested to the Hebrew mind.

(1) Its grateful repose. Jewish imagination delighted to portray it as a beatific place abounding with all kinds of pure and charming rural pleasures, a park watered by a pellucid river,

upon whose banks flourished trees so full of life that, unlike our orchard trees which produce but a single kind of fruit at one period of the year, they each bore twelve varieties and fruited every month. It is true that the Book of Revelation depicts heaven not only as a place of rural beauty but as an ideal city, studded with costly jewels, with each of its gates ■ pearl, and with streets of purest gold. To the Oriental mind this conjunction would not present so great an inconsistency as it does to us. It has been estimated that as much as nine-tenths of the vast area covered by the ancient city of Babylon consisted of gardens, parks, parades, and orchards. The city of Nineveh, which spread over an equally vast space, included similar cultivated gardens. And in modern cities of the East an unexpected amount of space is taken up by such parades. To speak of heaven as both a garden and a city would have the effect of linking together in it the characteristics of rest and progress, of repose and achievement. In the Christian conception of heaven both features are present. One sympathises with the tired woman who declared that, when she got to heaven, she intended to rest for the first thousand years. But the lines of the poet contain a deep truth :

“ Rest is not quitting
The busy career ;
Rest is the fitting
Of soul to its sphere.”

(2) Its final joy. Borrowing the Persian conception, the Hebrew mind saw in the Christian heaven a cool and fragrant paradise, which awaited the faithful soul beyond the barrier of death. It may be feared, however, that across the field of the believer’s visions and imaginations there usually flitted the spectre of self. The dominating idea was that of the self gratified and glorified. But our Lord Himself insisted that the joy of heaven is incomplete without the element of sacrifice and love. So far from being “a vacuous eternity,” “a state of ceaseless psalmody,” Christ’s conception of heaven places its supreme joy in the reclamation of the lost. *“Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”*

“ Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass’d in music out of sight.”

The joy of joys in paradise for the devout spirit must always be that it is the dwelling-place and home of Christ.

“Not coming down at eve,
To walk ■ little while, and then depart,
But in the Garden walketh evermore
The King of Peace. See ! this is He who lay
In the earth-garden dead, for the great love
Wherewith He loved the Church.”

A little fellow knocked at his father's study door. “What do you want ?” cried the father. “Nothing,” replied the child, “except to be where you are, father.” Much about the Garden of Paradise may be doubtful. Heaven is girt by mystery. But its supreme joy must lie in the fact that it is where Christ is. “*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*” “*With Me.*” During her mother's serious illness another child was taken to be with friends. Her mother died ; and some days after, the child was brought back home. She ran from room to room ; and missing her mother, she begged to be received in the house of the friends once more. Home had lost its interest when her mother was gone. Must it not be so with heaven ? Its joy of joys is Christ.

XXII

TURNING THE CLOUDS ABOUT

“ Every cloud on the under side
Is bright and shining ;
So now I turn my clouds about,
And always wear them inside out,
To show the lining.”

WONDERFUL things may be done by turning the clouds about. Back in the Old Testament, Ezekiel the prophet—a character less studied than he deserves—provides a striking example of how a very unfavourable environment can be conquered by the unflinching idealism of a great soul. Evidently one of the pioneers of effective preaching in the history of the world, he became the sensation of the hour amongst his people. His oratory seemed to them “ *a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice.* ”

Yet on the threshold of Ezekiel’s book we are surprised to find that it was “ *among the captives by the river Chebar* ” that his work was done. This eloquent and dramatic preacher, who denounced evil and passionately pled for righteousness and God, toiled in an environment which appeared the most unpropitious in the world.

People gathered in streets and doorways and discussed his sermons with bated breath, for he spoke with thrilling power and his tender passages were uttered in the form of beautiful poetry. But it was all achieved amid the gloom of the great captivity in Babylon.

As fair flowers grow in fetid marshes and choice plants cling to the rims of volcanoes, souls have lived greatly in just such environments.

A certain traveller alighted at the station of a pretty country village, and a friend in conversation said: "Patrick Henry the expositor was born here." "I do not wonder," rejoined the traveller, surveying the prospect and inhaling the lovely air, "it was natural for Patrick Henry to be grown here." "But we have not heard of any more Patrick Henrys in our population," interjected the friend, "just the one!"

Environment is nothing, unless there is a great mind or soul to turn the clouds about. Adam and Eve fell in Eden, and Judas in the very company of Christ. And on the other hand, there were saints in the household of Roman Nero, and Ezekiel's spiritual experiences came "*among the captives by the river Chebar.*"

Virgil was the son of a porter; Horace the son of a huckster; Demosthenes the son of a cutler; Terence the son of a slave. Columbus was the son of a weaver; Defoe, of a butcher;

Shakespeare, of a woodstapler ; Robert Burns, of a ploughman.

We cry for the favouring conditions ; but exile and captivity have very frequently been the environment which has winged the words and fired the souls of the greatest poets, thinkers, and saints. Some of the world's foremost books smell of midnight oil ; but there are many fine things in literature which were born amid prison damp.

St Paul did a good deal of his best work in a Roman dungeon, and St John wrote the book of Revelation while a prisoner in Patmos. The "Consolations of Philosophy," which was translated into English by Alfred the Great, was written by Boethius in a gaol at Pavia in the sixth century ; Dante's "Divina Commedia" was composed during the author's exile ; and Sir Richard Lovelace wrote several of his poems in prison, particularly the lines beginning :

" Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

Cervantes completed in a Spanish dungeon the plan of his "Don Quixote," and Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his "History of the World" in the Tower of London. It was in Bedford Jail that John Bunyan produced his "Pilgrim's Progress." "So, being again delivered," wrote Bunyan, "I

was had *home* to prison.” Shortly before her death, and after eighteen years of imprisonment, Mary Queen of Scots penned these impassioned words :

“ O my God and my Lord, I have trusted Thee :
O Jesus my Saviour, now liberate me.
In my enemy’s power, in affliction’s sad hour,
I languish for Thee.
In sorrowing, weeping, and bending the knee,
I adore and implore Thee to liberate me.”

From a prison in Vincennes Madame Guyon wrote : “ It sometimes seemed to me as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing now to do but sing.” And here are lines which that beautiful mystic spirit left to the world :

“ A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air ;
And in my songs I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there :
Well-pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.”

“ During the king’s pleasure ” Samuel Rutherford was confined to Aberdeen ; but “ the Lord is with me,” he said, “ and no king is better provided than I am. My Well-Beloved is kinder to me than ordinary and visiteth my soul.”

“ The true saint of the Covenant,” as Dean Stanley calls Rutherford, wrote his celebrated

“Letters” from what he designates his “palace” in Aberdeen. Shortly before his death at St Andrews, he was cited to appear before Parliament on a charge of high treason. “I am summoned,” he replied, “before a higher Judge and judicatory: that first summons I behove to answer; and ere a few days arrive, I shall be where few kings and great folks come.” The hymn, “The sands of time are Sinking,” written by Mrs Cousin after reading Rutherford’s “Letters,” embodies what are said to have been his dying words: “Glory dwelleth in Immanuel’s Land.” Thus have lofty spirits turned the clouds about. As Milton beautifully wrote:—

“O, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose Providence I love;
And in Thy mighty Will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.”

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